

Struggle by the Pen

THE UYGHUR DISCOURSE OF NATION AND
NATIONAL INTEREST, C. 1900-1949



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ONDŘEJ KLIMEŠ

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Struggle by the Pen

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*The Uyghur Discourse of Nation and National Interest,
c. 1900–1949*

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Ondřej Klimeš



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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

For my parents



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List of Acronyms

AH	Anno Hijra, year of <i>hijra</i>
AR	Anno Respublica, year of Chinese Republic
AUP*	<i>Abdukhalik Uyghur's Poems</i>
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress (Young Turks), late Ottoman Empire and early Turkish Republic
ETIA	East Turkestan Independence Association, 1933–34, Kashgar
ETIR	East Turkestan Republic, 1933–34, capital Kashgar
ETR	East Turkestan Republic, 1944–49, capital Ghulja
ETRYO	East Turkestan Revolutionary Youth Organization, 1944–49
F*	<i>Freedom</i> , newspaper of Xinjiang province, 1947–49
FT*	<i>Free Turkestan</i> , newspaper of the ETIR, 1933–4
I*	<i>Independence</i> , newspaper of the ETIR, 1933
INA	Ili National Army, military of the ETR
KMT	Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang
LET*	<i>Life of East Turkestan</i> , newspaper of the ETIR, 1933
LMW*	<i>Lutpulla Mutellip's Works</i>
MEP*	<i>Memtili Ependi's Poems</i>
MTAC	Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission
NL*	<i>New Life</i> , newspaper of Xinjiang province, 1934–37
PFK*	<i>Prints from Kashgar</i> (Jarring 1991)
PRC	People's Republic of China
RET*	<i>Revolutionary East Turkestan</i> , newspaper of the ETR, 1947–49
ROC	Republic of China, 1912–49
RS	Religious Supervision, government organ of the ETR
TCA	Turkestanian Compatriot Association, inner China from the 1930s
UEA	Uyghur Enlightenment Association, Xinjiang from 1934
USPDX	Union for Support of Peace and Democracy in Xinjiang, 1948–49
VCT*	<i>Voice of Chinese Turkestan</i> , newspaper of the central government, 1930s

* Acronyms for publications are used in citations only.

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Chronology of Major Political Events

1759	conquest of Yettishahr by the Qing
June 1864	Kucha uprising
January 1865	Yaqup Beg's invasion
January 1878	completion of the Qing reconquest
November 1884	provincialization of Xinjiang
May 1912	fall of the Qing in Xinjiang, Yang Zengxin in power
July 1928	Jin Shuren assumes power
April 1931	Komul uprising
April 12, 1931	Sheng Shicai assumes power
November 12, 1933	proclamation of the ETIR in Kashgar
February–July 1934	destruction of the ETIR, Sheng Shicai controls Kashgar
September 1937	Sheng Shicai reunites Xinjiang
September 1944	KMT takes control of Xinjiang
November 12, 1944	proclamation of the ETR in Ghulja
July 1946	inauguration of the Xinjiang coalition government
August 1947	collapse of the Xinjiang coalition government
December 1949	takeover of Xinjiang by the CPC

Preface and Acknowledgements

This book is the result of many fortunate circumstances that enabled me to engage in my exploration of China and modern Xinjiang. It draws on research that took place during my Ph.D. studies at Charles University in Prague between 2004 and 2011, and its first version was defended as a doctoral dissertation in March 2012. Parts of this final manuscript have been presented at several international conferences, and the dissertation was revised into this book between 2012 and 2013.

I would have been unable to perform this research without the complex assistance of Olga Lomová, who has been my patient teacher and advisor since the beginning of my Chinese studies in 1996 at the Institute of East Asian Studies of Charles University in Prague. I am also indebted to Veronika Zikmundová of the Institute of South and Central Asia of Charles University in Prague, whose enthusiasm first introduced me to the mystique of Xinjiang through her classes on Uyghur language in the fall of 1999 and spring of 2000. I also owe a great debt to Gardner Bovingdon for all the advice he gave me on the final stage of this research during my stay at the Department of Central Eurasian Studies of Indiana University in Bloomington between fall 2010 and summer 2011. I am deeply grateful to all of these mentors for their support and care.

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My interest in modern Xinjiang and China is credited in great part to the guidance and assistance of many individual teachers who have advised me either on this specific research or in other aspects of my interest in Xinjiang. I am especially grateful for the invaluable suggestions and cooperation of Professors and Doctors Eset Sulayman (today Radio Free Asia), Qurban Niyaz (Indiana University), Miroslav Hroch (Charles University in Prague), Jitka Malečková (Charles University in Prague), Laura Newby (Oxford University), Linda Benson (Oakland University), Kim Hodong (Seoul National University), Ildikó Bellér-Hann (University of Copenhagen), Edward Lazzerini (Indiana University), Wu Qina (Academia Sinica), Gao Sulan (Academia Historica), Guo Weixiong (Academia Historica), Guang Dingyuan (Frontier Policy Society), Arienne Dwyer (Kansas University), Justin Jon Rudelson, Milena Doleželová-Velingerová (University of Toronto/Charles University in Prague), Vlastimil Novák (Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures, Prague), Ablet Kamalov (Oriental Institute of Kazakhstan), Nabijan Tursun (Radio Free Asia), and Ondřej Beránek (Czech Academy of Sciences). I am also deeply grateful to the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions on an earlier version of this manuscript. I am also very thankful to the staff of the Lund University Library and the Library of the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences for their permission to publish some of the illustrations, and to Adam Horálek for his patient work on the map of Xinjiang for this volume.

It would have been impossible to write this book without meeting many Uyghur friends and teachers, whose cordiality has availed me of my command of the Uyghur language and provided me with an intimate familiarity with Uyghur society and Xinjiang reality. It was their hospitality and endless hours of devoted interaction with an outsider that nourished my initial interest in Uyghurs' past and present, which later evolved into my passion for more complex research. Some of these friends directed my attention toward important references, while others provided me with several valuable sources, usually under serious risk to their personal safety. I hope my deep gratitude to all of them is at least somewhat expressed by writing this book.

My most grateful acknowledgements belong first to my parents Zdeňka and Jan for a lifetime of support in all my pursuits, as well as for my upbringing, which is the most significant reason behind my desire to seek an understanding of modern Xinjiang and China. My deepest gratitude also belongs to my wife Anastasia, whose love and patience enabled me to find the final shape of this book.

I have chosen to name this book after one of its sources, penned by Muhemmed Imin Bughra, because I believe his arguments and lifetime work represent in the most suitable way the central theme of this book.

Introduction

Knowledge is strength.

UYGHUR PROVERB

What follows is a study of how Uyghur intellectuals perceived their nation and national interest in the first half of the twentieth century. It was written based on my belief that nation and nationalism create a worldview that significantly informs the modern world we live in. It is true that the end of the Cold War, abolishment of the apartheid, globalization, European integration, multiculturalism, and similar recent phenomena do promote the disappearance of national boundaries and denationalization of human society. Indeed, from a certain angle our world may seem to be entering a postnational phase of history; however, in other contexts, the opposite trend is taking place—national consciousness still exists and sometimes it is even intensified by contemporary events. Disintegration of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia; reservations of EU states toward the loss of some of their national decision-making powers; the resurgence of European nationalist and neo-Nazi movements; minority rights movements; the ethnopolitical conflicts in Northern Ireland, the Basque Country, Corsica, Nagorno-Karabakh, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Myanmar; and other similar phenomena testify to the persisting significance of national and ethnic identities in the contemporary world. While this volume seeks to shed some light on the issues of the Uyghur national identity and nationalism, it can be also read as an attempt to expand the general knowledge of forces that shape our world.

Some colleagues have pointed to the “weakness” (Gellner 1983, 49–50) or “philosophical poverty” (Anderson 1991, 5) of nationalism, as well as to its inability to function as a single ideology unmixed with other political theories (Denitch 1994, 31, 142). Hence nationalism can be regarded not as an ideology itself, but rather as “an ideological appendage; a cause which both legitimizes a particular political ideology and symbolizes its ultimate goal” (Newby 1986, 218). Scholars nevertheless continue to seek answers to several recurring questions, such as “What is a nation?”, “When does it form?”, “For what reasons does it emerge?”, “What are the forces that shape its birth?”, or “What are the stages of this process?” These queries have been engaging the minds of several generations of specialists across multiple disciplines since the very beginning of modernity. It is, in fact, often argued that modernity, as such, is to a large degree defined by answers to these questions. But even in the postmodern world at the dawn of the twenty-first century, the debate on nation and nationalism is

not losing its complexity, and an intense discussion continues about even the most basic terminology and approaches to these concepts.

This volume hopes to contribute to the discussion by presenting a case study of the question of nationalism among Uyghurs, a Turkic Muslim minority, today numbering approximately ten million and mostly living in the vast Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in northwestern People's Republic of China (PRC). The research examines the evolution of the discourse of nation and its interests as formulated by Uyghur intellectuals and activists between circa 1900 and 1949, the context in which this discourse came into being, and the factors that contributed to its emergence. In other words, this book reconstructs the process by which the premodern, educated elites' representation of communal identity and interest evolved into the early modern Uyghur national consciousness, as well as the course of the politicization of this consciousness into national agitation and nationalist ideology. As such, this volume explores the history of early modern Uyghur nationalist ideology by tracing the process of the Uyghur national awakening as perceived and expressed by Uyghur intelligentsia in the early modern era between the late Qing dynasty and the founding of the PRC in 1949.

Apart from contributing to the study of the emergence of modern nations, national movements, and nationalism, this text adds to the amount of research on modern Xinjiang. Due to its position along a set of ancient trade routes commonly known as the Silk Road, Xinjiang is, even today, romanticized by many as a mysterious, wild, and remote periphery of China and the Turko-Islamic world. This image underlines the remoteness and marginality of Xinjiang and is further augmented by the apparent decline of the once thriving Silk Road during the Middle Ages, after the East-West trade routes shifted to the seas of South Asia. In this fashion, Xinjiang continues to be orientalized as a land with a glorious past but dismal and little-known present. Even on the eve of modernity in Central Asia one hundred years ago, Xinjiang was considered one of the most remote and backward places in Eurasia. Such a perception is also somewhat implied by the rather scarce amount of published research on modern Xinjiang history, politics, and culture. Although the extent of research on Xinjiang and the Uyghurs has grown over recent years, numerous events and phenomena from both the past and present are still a true *terra incognita* within the academic realm. Early modern Uyghur intellectual history between 1884 and 1949 is one of the more mysterious phenomena in the history of Xinjiang. This study strives to expand the knowledge of the, thus far, insufficiently understood emergence of the modern Uyghur national idea in Xinjiang.

Besides being known for its romantic haze of mystery and timelessness, Xinjiang is also recognized as a place plagued by social instability and violent conflict. In fact, bloody clashes and uprisings have been erupting incessantly since the incorporation of Xinjiang into the PRC in 1949. One such wave of violence swept through the region in the 1990s, and another one has risen since 2008. The tragic events that occurred in the regional capital of Urumchi in July 2009 brought about several hundred deaths. Apart from the fact that Xinjiang's situation is seriously affecting the welfare and lives of inhabitants of both Xinjiang and the PRC, it is also showing the troubled state of the region's integration into modern China. Equally evident is that as much as the current situation in Xinjiang is the outcome of sixty years of administration by the Communist Party of China (CPC), it is also a direct continuation of past historical trends and developments. Interaction of the Uyghurs' ancestors with the Qing dynasty (1759–1912) and the Republican (1912–49) administration, their intelligentsia's perceptions of national identity and interest, the origins of the communist nationality policy in Xinjiang, and other issues examined in this research are thus instrumental to understanding events in contemporary Xinjiang. Today's Uyghurs identify with one or sometimes more than one of the definitions of their nation presented in the sources used in this volume, while a number of post-1949 events have been directly continued from or inspired by the pre-PRC dynamics shaping the Xinjiang Turkic Muslims' national identity and interest. In short, it is difficult to overstate the importance of the conclusions in this book when seeking to understand events that have been taking place in Xinjiang since 1949.

The situation in Xinjiang is an integral component of the ethnic, political, social, and economic context of not only the PRC but also of Central Asia. From the past to the present, the Uyghurs have been an inseparable part of the Central Asian Turko-Islamic milieu with close ties to both their genetic relatives in the greater Turkic world and to their fellow Muslim brethren in Asia and Africa. Throughout the twentieth century, developments in Islamic countries, the Ottoman Empire, and Turkey, as well as Russia- and Soviet-administered Western Turkestan were closely related to those of China-administered Eastern Turkestan, and those ties have not been severed even by the two decades of Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s and 1970s. Many of these bonds have continued to exist after the collapse of the Soviet Empire and emergence of Central Asian nation-states in 1991. As illustrated by the tragic anti-Uzbek pogroms in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, Central Asian ethnic conflicts are far from resolved. Political configuration in the five Central Asian republics, interaction between the republics' authorities and the ethnic and religious sentiment of their citizens,

and the emergence of modern Central Asian Turkic national identities are among the most prominent issues in the region. In this context, the birth of the modern Uyghur national consciousness in Xinjiang is instrumental to comprehending the modern reality of Central Asia, as well as patterns of communal identity and interests of Turkic nations, in general.

Both ancient and modern policymakers of China-based polities have been aware of the enormous geopolitical significance of the territory that is today called Xinjiang but that is sometimes very aptly referred to as Chinese Turkestan. It was along the fabled Silk Road where trade and knowledge streamed in all four cardinal directions, which made the territory function as a gate to the West for China and to China for the West. Its role as a cross-roads has carried over to the modern era. Although Owen Lattimore, one of the doyens of Xinjiang studies, was not the first to point to its reemerging geopolitical significance in modern times, he aptly expressed this trend in the first sentence of his excellent study of Xinjiang, *Pivot of Asia: "A NEW CENTER of gravity is forming in the world"* (1950, 3). Since the onset of the twentieth century, Xinjiang has been the focus of a comprehensive policy instituted by the Chinese empire and aimed at retaining and consolidating control over this strategically priceless region. During World War II, Xinjiang became one of the vitally important *strategic rears* (Norins 1944) of the Republic of China (ROC) as well as a zone of clashing interests between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Soviet and Chinese communist parties. After the founding of the PRC, Xinjiang turned into a hotbed of open military conflict with India in 1962 and with the Soviet Union (USSR) in 1969. Xinjiang also became a base for Chinese operations against the USSR throughout much of the Afghan war, when China funneled military materiel through the Karakoram highway and even trained Afghan *mujahedeen* near Kashgar and Khotan (Shichor 2004, 157–58). This involvement resulted in the introduction of radical Islamic fundamentalism into Xinjiang from Pakistan beginning in the 1980s, and after 2001, it also enabled the PRC to clothe its Xinjiang policy in vocabulary based on its own version of the War on Terror. Continuing tensions in the Kashmir region and the border dispute between China and India over Aksai Chin also suggest that even today Xinjiang still holds the potential of turning into a locus of armed conflict between nuclear powers. Xinjiang also plays a key role in the PRC's current energy security strategy. It is among China's top domestic suppliers of oil and other precious commodities, and it is also a vital point of transit through which energy resources are transported from Central Asia and other parts of the world to China's coastal areas. Proposed pipelines from Pakistan's Gwadar and Russia's southern Siberia are likely to further increase Xinjiang's future

role in the PRC's energy security. The region is also important in connecting China to the West through a railroad network ranging from eastern China to Turkey and Europe. Recent economic projects, such as the construction of the Kashgar Special Economic Zone and the establishment of Urumchi as the core city of western China's development, also underline Xinjiang's economic significance for China. Xinjiang is simply one of the most vibrant geopolitical hubs in Asia, as well as a vitally important crown jewel of the CPC.

This book seeks to illuminate some of the complex issues surrounding Xinjiang's modern history, Republican China's ethnic policy, and nation-forming processes in general. A continuous Xinjiang policy has been maintained by governing authorities throughout the late Qing, Republican and Communist eras. Further, there is a close correlation between the CPC's treatment of its internal others and its relations with foreign nations and cultures. I hope, therefore, that this book is revealing to all observers of the PRC's ascendancy today. I hope this study also shows that many of the complex issues the Chinese communist party-state is today facing in Xinjiang have been inherited from the Republican era, and that the issues pointed out by authors of the texts researched in this book bear a significant resemblance to many aspects of today's situation in Xinjiang. And it is particularly in view of the hundreds of casualties claimed by the violent escalation of the Xinjiang conflict since 2008, that I hope this book illustrates that the spectacular historical leap (历史性跨越 *lìshǐ xìng kuàiyuè*) in Xinjiang's social development, which the CPC claims to have achieved since 1949, will be truly accomplished only after the Xinjiang policymakers accede to the demands of political and cultural autonomy that the Uyghur intelligentsia have been raising for approximately one century. Finally, I would also like this book to help Uyghur academicians, officials, and the interested public to better understand the past and present of their nation.

The State of Research in Early Modern Uyghur National Consciousness

Existing research into the emergence of the modern Uyghur national consciousness and nationalism in early modern Xinjiang (1884–1949) is closely tied to the scarcity of primary sources of research. This paucity is caused primarily by the fact that originally very few newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, and similar printed matter were produced by native Turkic intelligentsia during this period. As Chapter 2 of this volume illustrates, until the 1930s, Xinjiang

was, in a certain respect, isolated from contemporary trends in publishing, education, or political activism. As a result, only a small portion of its indigenous Turkic population was literate, an even smaller portion was engaged in active writing, and a yet smaller number disseminated their ideas in print. Another reason for a scarcity of original sources is the turbulent events which have been taking place in the region since the beginning of modernity. As a result, any of the books, journals, and writings that were produced have been accidentally or deliberately destroyed in uprisings, civil wars, and ideological campaigns from the late Qing dynasty until today. The result is the sad fact that in modern Xinjiang it is not very easy to come across an original piece of paper with printed Uyghur text that predates 1949. With a large quantity of the written evidence describing the tumultuous events in Republican Xinjiang lost or inaccessible for research, and with the last living eye witnesses aging or passing away in recent years, it seems as if a significant and formative period of Uyghur intellectual history is disappearing. This book intends to capture at least a certain part of the mental landscape of pre-1949 Chinese Turkestan.

A sizeable amount of research has been published on the general political history of Xinjiang in the early modern era (1884–1949). Primary sources for this research can be roughly divided into two categories. The first is material authored by Xinjiang governments between 1884 and 1949, such as that of the late Qing dynasty (清, 1878–1912), Yang Zengxin (楊增新, 1912–28), Jin Shuren (金樹仁, 1928–33), Sheng Shicai (盛世才, 1933–44), and the Nationalist provincial administrators and officials—also known as the Kuomintang (國民黨; 1944–49). In particular, this type of source consists of government proclamations, communications, investigative reports and assessments, memoirs by officials working in Xinjiang, and similar official documentation. A wide range of such material is openly available in the archives of Taiwan and, to a certain degree, also in the archives in the PRC. The other group consists of sources authored by foreign agencies active in the region in the late Qing and Republican periods. Many of these sources were assembled by mainly Russian/Soviet, British, and American consulates that were based in the cities of Kashgar, Urumchi, Ghulja, Chöchek, and Sharasume during this timeframe. Other sources of this kind are investigative reports by travelers who journeyed in early modern Xinjiang on a combination of scientific, journalistic, intelligence, or other types of missions. Many of these texts have been published, and some—especially consular and intelligence reports—remain in the archives of their respective countries, where they are relatively well preserved and accessible. Another valuable body of foreign-authored materials was gathered by Christian missionaries active in the region during the period, namely the Swedish Mission Society in southeastern Xinjiang and the China Inland

Mission in Urumchi. The missionary materials are also relatively easy to access, mainly in Sweden and Great Britain.

Such sources enable an approach to Xinjiang's early modern history from two angles. One is the *administration perspective*, whose major theme is the management of Xinjiang by central and/or provincial governments. The other is the *competition perspective*, which analyses the complex interaction of Xinjiang Chinese administrators' agenda with that of foreign powers and also indigenous anti-Chinese insurgent groups—a phenomenon which may be referred to as the *Great Xinjiang Game*. It is these two perspectives that characterize a major proportion of currently available scientific research concerned with the history of early modern Xinjiang. Several instances of such analyses are works by Du Zhongyuan (杜重遠; 1938), Martin R. Norins (1944), Owen Lattimore (1950), An Ning (安甯; 1952), Allen S. Whiting and Sheng Shicai (1958), Clarmont Skrine and Pamela Nightingale (1973), Lars-Erik Nyman (1977), Han-jung Ziemann (1984), Chen Huisheng and Chen Chao (陈慧生, 陈超; 1999), David Wang (1999, 2000), and Huang Jianhua (黄建华; 2003). A special mention should be made here about Zhang Dajun (張大軍), a former KMT military intelligence officer who was based in Xinjiang until 1949. He authored the 新疆風暴七十年 *Xīnjiāng fēngbào qīshí nián* (*Seventy Years of Storm in Xinjiang*; 1980), a monumental 12-volume, 7500-page opus drawing on his own eye-witness experiences in the region, as well as on an enormous number of official documents and other primary sources. Zhang's text presents a KMT version of both the administration and competition perspective, and it is perhaps the most complex existing narrative of early modern Xinjiang history. Zhou Hong's (周泓) book, which is also conceived from both the administration and competition perspectives and works with a limited number of Uyghur sources, also provides a detailed survey of Republican Xinjiang social issues (2001).

While studies drawn up from the administration and competition perspectives present a fair amount of information on the political history of Republican Xinjiang, they convey only modest knowledge about one of the key actors in these historical events. Xinjiang's indigenous settled Turkic Muslims (also aptly called East Turkestanis or Uyghurs) are portrayed as agents of lesser significance compared to the other participants in both administrative and competitive interactions in Xinjiang, and the main interest of the texts is directed toward the history, nature, and form of the interactions rather than these participants. It is here useful to borrow Ildikó Bellér-Hann's (2008, 1–2) reference to what can be called the *boundary perspective* formulated by Fredrik Barth: "The nature of continuity of ethnic groups is clear: it depends on maintenance of a boundary" (1969, 14). Or, in other words: "The critical focus of investigation

from this point of view becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff within that it encloses" (Barth 1969, 15). A similar statement was made by Thomas Hylland Eriksen:

The first fact of ethnicity is the application of systematic distinctions between insiders and outsiders; between Us and Them. If no such principle exists there can be no ethnicity, since ethnicity presupposes an institutionalised relationship between delineated categories whose members consider each other to be culturally distinctive. (2010, 23)

The majority of existing research clarifies little about the inside of the ethnic boundary of a community that constituted some 75% of the province's population on the eve of the communist takeover (Benson and Svanberg 1988, 34; Toops 2004, 1). As such, relying solely on Barth's boundary perspective cannot produce a sufficient amount of knowledge on Uyghurs in the early modern era. Bellér-Hann opined, "The boundary focus is important, but, in itself, unsatisfactory" (2008, 2) and dedicated her volume solely to the study of the cultural matter *within* the Uyghur ethnic boundary, basing her historico-anthropological perspective on extensive field research and textual primary sources. Analogously, in her study of the northern Xinjiang insurgency between 1944 and 1949, Linda Benson submitted that approaching events in Chinese frontier regions from the perspective of China's domestic minority policy provides only a single section of the overall interpretation. Rather, frontier peoples' modern history emerges "from circumstances and perceptions uniquely their own and distinct from that of the Chinese," and their struggle against Chinese domination should be viewed not as a rebellion, but rather as "an attempt to win political and military control over what they themselves viewed as their traditional homelands," or, in other words, as a liberation struggle conceived by twentieth-century nationalism (Benson 1990, 8). Along this line, Benson's work draws on large amounts of primary textual sources related to Uyghur intellectual history, written in several languages.

Similar to the books of Bellér-Hann and Benson, this volume seeks to adopt what can be tentatively called the *content perspective* or, more specifically, an *Uyghurological perspective*, which pays attention primarily to the content of the ethnic boundary of the early modern Uyghur community. More particularly, this book focuses on the Uyghur elites' ideas and discourse of nation and national interest. I do not argue that examining the interactions among early modern Xinjiang's various ethnic communities is irrelevant to understanding early modern Uyghur issues; instead, this book shows the importance and complexity of criteria according to which Uyghurs perceived themselves as

different from other groups or polities, as well as changes in significance of the modern Uyghur ethnic boundary. This research strives to illuminate the forces behind the Uyghurs' realization of their existence and the importance of their ethnic boundaries and need for preservation. Instead of examining how nascent modern Uyghur national consciousness projected itself onto the stage of political events in Xinjiang during the late Qing and Republican periods, this volume aims to clarify how this consciousness originated and evolved inside the minds and writings of Uyghur intellectuals and propagandists.

A certain amount of research has already been done on the early modern history of Xinjiang, which has at least partially been conceived from the Uyghurological perspective. Two important works are entirely dedicated to the topic of early modern Uyghur nationalism. Thus far, the most systematic and thoroughly researched account of political events in the province during the period from 1911 to 1949 was authored by Andrew Forbes, and its central theme is "the development and nature of Warlord government and Muslim dissidence" (1986, 1). Thematically similar is Laura Newby's study, which explored the "nationalist movement of Eastern Turkestan—a people's search for autonomy during the period 1930–50" and sought to "trace the rise of national consciousness among the peoples of Eastern Turkestan as reflected in the development of the nationalist movement" (Newby 1986, v). Wang Ke's analysis of the "East Turkestani independence movement" from 1930s to 1940s was published too recently to be thoroughly reflected upon in this volume (2013). Shinmen Yasushi's articles (1990, 1994, and 2001) researched events in southern Xinjiang in the 1930s, including the first modern attempt at founding an independent state of East Turkestan in 1933, while Eden Naby's article looked more broadly into general intellectual trends acting in southern Xinjiang in the 1930s (1987). Linda Benson's works (1990, 1991, and 1992), which were based on a large number of primary sources, provided a deep insight into the Uyghur liberation movement and nationalist ideology of the late Republican era during the period 1944–49 and are indeed essential for understanding pre-1949 Xinjiang. Roostam Sadri's article also concentrated on the Uyghurs' as well as other nationalities' second attempt at independence in the Republican era (1984). Oishi Shinjiro's article researched early modernization trends in the Kashgar area (2000), while Eric Schleussel's explored pre-1949 Uyghur education (2009).

The formation of Uyghur national consciousness has also attracted a certain amount of scholarly attention. Several earlier arguments (exemplified, for example, in the works of Pritsak [1959], Chen [1977], Gladney [1990], Rudelson [1991], and Rudelson [1997]) stress the *institutional aspect* of the phenomenon. This book's interpretation argues that after the word *Uyghur* as an ethnonym

fell out of use for some five hundred years following the Islamization of the Uyghur Buddhist kingdom in today's east Xinjiang, which occurred during late fifteenth century. The crucial moment in modern history was when the institutional decision was made to revitalize "Uyghur" as a designation for the indigenous settled Turkic Muslims of the southern and eastern Xinjiang oases. The most significant institutional resolutions were, in particular, the decision to revitalize the term "Uyghur" for use in Soviet Central Asia, which was decided at a conference held in Tashkent in 1921 by delegates of Xinjiang origin, and the introduction of the concept of Uyghur nationality into the Xinjiang nationality policy by Sheng Shicai in 1934 (Pritsak 1959, 525; Chen 1977, 100; Gladney 1990, 4; Rudelson 1991, 67; Rudelson 1997, 5–7). Some contentions go as far as claiming that prior to the moment of being labeled as "Uyghur" in the modern era, the people designated as such possessed no sense of ethnic commonality or national cohesion and clung to subethnic (local) or supraethnic (religious) patterns of self-identification. In another words, such interpretation submits that the disuse of the term "Uyghur" between the early sixteenth and early twentieth centuries also implies a total absence of a collective subreligious and supralocal identity of people designated by this term prior to and following the period of this disuse (Warikoo 1985, 107–8; Gladney 1990, 11). It has been similarly argued that on the eve of the early modern era in the mid-seventeenth century, inhabitants of eastern Turkestan

spoke closely related Turkic languages and shared a common Islamic culture and settled mode of life, but they had no sense of belonging to a single nationality, and their cities were not united by any common political structure other than that provided by the Oirat conquest. (Fletcher 1968, 218)

and that

the idea that the Kashgarians and the inhabitants of Uighuristan were one and the same nationality—let alone they were all Uighurs—is an innovation stemming largely from the needs of twentieth-century nationalism. (Fletcher 1968, 364; also see Fletcher 1978a, 69)

Another way of understanding the formation of the Uyghur modern national consciousness maintains that the settled Turkic residents of Xinjiang shared some sort of ethnic kinship even prior to being labeled as "Uyghur" in the 1920s and 1930s. One version of this view was posed by Geng Shimin who argued that the modern Uyghur nationality had already emerged by the early sixteenth

century after the fusion of indigenous Indo-European groups with Turkic Uyghur immigrants and the subsequent political, economic, religious, cultural, and linguistic unification of the Tarim basin (1984). Laura Newby posited that as early as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the people of southern Xinjiang shared a sense of commonality, which surpassed their local identification with a particular oasis and even extended north of Tianshan and to eastern Xinjiang (2007). Similarly, Ildikó Bellér-Hann's thorough survey implies that the early modern Uyghurs of Xinjiang were a distinct ethnic community between 1884 and 1949 whose common characteristics overpowered the local identities of its constituent components (2008). David Brophy's (2005) and Sean Roberts' (2010) research showed that in late Czarist and early Soviet Central Asia, negotiation of the contents of the label "Uyghur"—of Uyghur ethnic identity—unfolded as a complex process which lasted from the early 1910s well into the 1930s and that this process occurred as much among various elements within the Uyghur ethnic community as between this community and Soviet authorities. Similarly, Justin Jon Rudelson pointed out that there existed potent cohesive forces leading to the adoption and maintenance of the modern Uyghur identity as it was defined by the state in the 1930s (1991, 67), and since the fifteenth century, the ancient Uyghur identity and common culture existed as a historical undercurrent that was redefined and tapped into by Soviet and Sheng Shicai's ethnic policies in the 1920s and 1930s (1997, 6–7).

Research Objectives

This research elaborates on the second of the two above-summarized approaches to the origins and formation of the modern Uyghur national consciousness: it looks into notions of communal identity and interest as presented by the Turkic Muslim intellectuals of Xinjiang throughout the entire early modern era from circa 1900 to 1949 (that is to say, prior to the appearance and official institution of the term "Uyghur" in Xinjiang in the 1920s and 1930s, respectively). This volume traces and inspects the emergence of modern Uyghur ideas of nation and nationalism in Xinjiang, as articulated in texts authored by early modern Uyghur intellectuals in the late Qing (from circa 1900) and Republican periods (until 1949). It also reconstructs the creation of Uyghur national symbology and verbal nation work performed by early modern Uyghur intelligentsia in their discourse of nation and national interest. Based on the chronology and contents of the primary sources, this survey is structured into four research chapters. They are concerned with the pre-modern intellectual perceptions of communal identity and interest of Xinjiang

settled Turkic Muslims during the late Qing dynasty (Chapter 1), the emergence of the discourse of modern Uyghur national consciousness in the period from the late Qing period to the late 1920s (Chapter 2), the politicization of nascent national consciousness into intensified national and nationalist arguments in the 1930s (Chapter 3), and the rhetorical negotiation of the status of Xinjiang Turkic Muslims within the ROC and within northern Xinjiang in the 1930s and 1940s (Chapter 4). As it is dealing with a history of ideas and an evolution of discourse, the study does not explicitly argue that there was a direct chronological relation between the ideological concepts explored in respective chapters. The narrative framework, on the other hand, does present a tentative outline of the evolution of the late Qing and Republican Uyghur discourse of nation and national interest. This book thus hopes to address Miroslav Hroch's general observation that there is "a stagnation of comparative research" on the topic of national movements (Hroch 1996, 78), as well as David Brophy's call for more attention to the "processes of change both within the East Turkestani community, and in their relations with the peoples they lived among" (Brophy 2005, 165).

The first concept addressed by this research is *discourse*. This research treats discourse as a set of ideas, images, perceptions, and beliefs about nation and national interest expressed and rendered into writing by intellectuals, who wrote in the spheres of historiography, literature, journalism, and politics, or possibly in several of these fields. In another words, this study examines discourse as the instrument used by endogenous intelligentsia to articulate and disseminate their perceptions of communal (or national) identity and interest of Xinjiang indigenous settled Turkic Muslims. Perception of a common national identity has been previously described as when a large number of people feel, consider, or imagine themselves to be members of this nation (Seton-Watson 1977, 5; Connor 1978, 156; Connor 1984, xiv; Barth 1969, 15). Benedict Anderson illustrated how the collapse of imperial and religious realms, changing perceptions of time, growing prestige of vernaculars, and subsequent marketing of vernacularized books, newspapers, and other printed matter played a critical role in the emergence of the national imagination in the early modern era (1991). Along with these arguments, this inquiry investigates the specifics of the emergence of the national idea in the minds of early modern Uyghur intellectuals. In particular, this research aims to show how and when the various markers of a nation, such as common name, religion, language, culture, history, customs, identity sites, or myths of common origin, were articulated in intellectual discourse; what role they played in the debate of Uyghur national awakening; and how they were used by respective actors in the early modern Uyghur national movement as well as articulators of nationalist ideology. This

study illustrates how, despite the fact that early modern Uyghur intellectuals shared an enlightened drive toward their nation's well-being, their perceptions of nation and its interest sometimes varied depending on the time when they were active and the particular political agency they became affiliated with.

The textual approach of this research, or its focus on discourse of national identity and interest as expressed in intellectuals' writings, does not reveal much knowledge about what portion of the indigenous Xinjiang settled Turkic population actually identified with these intellectual perceptions. In other words, the book stays within the field of the history of ideas and refrains from measuring the social validity and mobilization potential of late Qing and Republican Uyghur intellectual discourse. It does not address what has been elsewhere called the *social penetration* (Smith 1986, 70–72) of the national idea among the non-elite strata and the appeal the nationalist ideology carried for the common people (Breuilly 1993, 120). It is sensible to assume that due to limited economic conditions in the province, only a very small proportion of Turkic inhabitants native to late Qing and Republican Xinjiang had the capacity to cogitate in categories such as communal identity and interest. It is also clear that only an even more modest subgroup of this already modest proportion of individuals was able to put their thoughts into writing (Bellér-Hann 2008, 327). Similarly, observations made by foreign nationals active in early modern Xinjiang reveal that the perceptions of communal identity embraced by the general Xinjiang Turkic public were often quite different from those held by their kindred intellectuals and political activists. In fact, apart from the perceptions of communal identity and interest addressed in Chapter 1, the texts examined here and the biographical data of their authors reveal close involvement of Uyghur intelligentsia with politics. Their discourse of national identity and interest was therefore often conceived more as political propaganda than as an effort at a realistic description of the beliefs and feelings of the general population. And given the fact that no systematic contemporary field research was conducted on perceptions of communal interest and identity in early modern Xinjiang, no fully reliable means exist of assessing the depth of social penetration of the early modern Uyghur intellectual discourse of nation and national interest. But although it seems that the appeal of these concepts to the common settled Turkic populace of Xinjiang oases is rather difficult to assess, I hope that future studies will answer a very important question, which implicitly results from this research, and which I was asked numerous times in many different ways by friends and colleagues when presenting my argument: what does the emergence of national identity and interest in an intellectual discourse reveal about the beliefs of the rest of the early modern Uyghur society?

In exploration of the concept of *nation*, this study aspires to answer the following question: According to which characteristics did the Uyghur intellectuals perceive their community as one group of people? Expressed in national terminology: By what criteria did Uyghur intellectuals define their nation? It is important to remain aware that the phenomenon of nation originated in a European context and has been only indirectly transferred into other culturo-political realms throughout the world, such as Central and East Asia. Therefore, the concept of nation does not have the same content and dynamics in the early modern Uyghur milieu as it does in contexts described by most currently available studies of nation and nationalism. For the purpose of relating the Uyghur case study to national phenomena throughout the world, this survey is nevertheless anchored in several methodological approaches to national identity and nation-formation processes. First, it is the primordialist and perennialist theory that interprets nation as a group of people bound together by shared innate and organic attributes, such as kinship, language, or culture, who at a certain point become politically active. According to Pierre van den Berghe, a nation is an extended kinship (*ethny*) of people, who became politically conscious and aspire to create a state on the grounds of belonging to this *ethny* (1981). John Armstrong has illustrated that premodern ethnic identities existed in medieval European and Islamic culturo-political spheres and were later transformed into modern nations (1982). The examination of common traits shared by members of such premodern collectivity also clarifies the boundaries that are vital for the existence of the collectivity (Barth 1969, 14).

Regarding the primordialist perspective, the following research responds to the above-mentioned thesis that prior to the introduction of the ethnonym “Uyghur” in 1921 in Soviet Central Asia and 1934 in Xinjiang, there was no Uyghur nation (Gladney 1990). It is indeed impossible to identify the modern use of the term “Uyghur,” which denotes a politicized community and is itself a reflection of a nationalized worldview produced by modernity, with the way the word was used from the seventh to the early sixteenth centuries when it acted rather as a clan and dynastic name for a tribal confederation (as illustrated for instance by Hebibulla 2000, 43–55; Kamalov 2006, 17–21). The practice of using the term “Uyghur” in the modernized and politicized sense to denote a nation, nationality, or ethnic group (*millet*) could have hardly existed before the emergence of the national idea in Xinjiang between the late Qing dynasty and the CPC takeover. It is equally problematic to interpret the entire history of Xinjiang as a continuous movement of primordial “people of all nationalities” (*her millet khelqi*, 各族人民 *gèzú rénmin*) toward ethnic unity and unification with the motherland (as argued for instance by Qian 1999; Li 2003). And in the context of China, it is also anachronistic to call historical ethnic and cultural

communities by the modern term 民族 *mínzú* (in English “nation,” “nationality,” or “ethnic group”), for it appears that the term was not used in the Chinese milieu until the 1890s (Leibold 2007, 8; Crossley 1990, 19; Dikötter 1994, 97).

On the other hand, it is equally problematic to infer that since the term “Uyghur” generally fell out of extensive use for a group of currently living people (and was instead used to refer to ancestral tribal and clan formations or geographic locations) since the sixteenth century, the people who had been previously or subsequently labeled by this word also ceased to exist or lost their sense of communal identity. Chapter 1 argues that, to echo a claim of Mark C. Elliott, the process of ethnicity did not operate in its principles all that differently in late Qing Xinjiang than it does today (2001, 19). Even though the national idea or modern ethnonyms did not yet exist in Xinjiang prior to beginning of the twentieth century and, therefore, the contemporary community of ancestors of today’s Uyghurs cannot be labeled by the word “nation,” some late Qing, premodern intelligentsia of the Xinjiang Turkic Muslim oasis-dwellers articulated a clear perception of the communal identity of their fellow kinsmen that can, in retrospect, be regarded as protonational.

This study also elaborates on Anthony Smith’s ethnosymbolist approach, which observes the significance of common symbols, myths, memories, values, rituals, and traditions in modern nation-forming processes. Smith argues that modern nations have their origins in premodern ethnic categories, which are groups that outside people perceive as a distinct body of people but which can themselves have a very low degree of communal consciousness. Ethnic categories can gradually evolve into ethnic communities, which—already prior to the emergence of modern nations—possess a number of common characteristics, specifically a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a shared culture, an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity (Smith 1986, 22–31). Apart from these criteria, Smith’s more recent definition of a nation increasingly considers legal, political, and territorial dimensions. A nation is

a named and self-defining human community whose members cultivate shared memories, symbols, myths, traditions, and values, inhabit and are attached to historic territories or “homelands”, create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and standardized laws. (Smith 2009, 29)

Chapter 1 identifies a number of symbolic concepts which led late Qing Xinjiang Turkic elites to portray the local populace as a single community, while Smith’s descriptions of ethnicism, ethnic resistance, and cultural restoration are relevant for the topic of the whole book (Smith 1986, 5–6).

Smith's ethnosymbolist approach holds that modern nations and nationalism are born of premodern ethnic categories and ethnic communities that are defined by a variety of established symbols. This survey, however, shows that even the symbols themselves can be a modern illusion. As Eric Hobsbawm argued, the national phenomenon cannot be adequately studied without due attention to invented traditions, because much of what constitutes a modern nation consists of constructed and invented components and also draws on recent national symbols (1983, 14). In the discourse of the modern Uyghur nation and nationalism, it was often the symbols of the modern Uyghur nation themselves that were the invented traditions, or newly emerged "ancient" heritages, and functioned as legitimate cornerstones of nationalist ideology and discourse. This argument also corroborates Rudelson's previously mentioned thesis of ancient Uyghur identity as a symbolic ancient repertoire that could be "tapped into or redefined" in the early twentieth century (1997, 6–7). While the existence of the premodern repertoire of national practice is confirmed by this research, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 show that the primordial symbols of the ancient Uyghur nation emerged only in the first decades of the Republican era.

The modernist and constructivist view interprets nations as social constructs that emerged as an attribute of modernity or as a consequence of modernization. For Ernest Gellner, nations are groups of people with common ideas, signs, associations, ways of behaving, and communicating (i.e., culture) who recognize other members of the group by its component elements. At the same time, nations are a result of the industrialization process as traditional centralized society transforms into a modern decentralized one. The existence of industrialized society is dependent upon the cultivation of a homogenized body of uniformly educated individuals who become the nationals of their state. For Gellner, nations are constructed by nationalism (1983). For Miroslav Hroch, nation comes into existence as a result of primarily economic changes and is defined by common historical, economic, territorial, political, religious, cultural, linguistic, and other ties and also by a sense of equality of its members. Modern nations arise as an outcome of two main kinds of nation-building process—either within the boundaries of one ethnic culture, when the old feudal system is transformed into a civic society composed of more or less equal citizens, or when an ethnic community dominated by ethnically heterogeneous exogenous elites successfully establishes itself not only against the internal, old, and feudal ruling class, but also against the external rule (Hroch 1996; Hroch 2000). For Benedict Anderson, nations—or imagined, limited, and sovereign communities—are formed partially as a result of secularization, the rise of print capitalism, and the vernacularization of text culture (1991). Chapter 2 of this volume demonstrates a correlation between modernization

trends and the emergence of national identities in the Ottoman Empire/Turkey and Russo/Soviet Turkic communities, as well as analogous phenomena occurring within Turkic Muslim communities in Xinjiang.

This volume strives to preserve an ecumenic approach and does not treat the primordialist, ethnosymbolist, and modernist perspectives as distinct, contradictory, or mutually exclusive trichotomial correlatives. It does not claim that the Uyghur nation started to exist at a particular point in time or place and does not even treat nation as an object but rather as a mode of perceiving social reality displayed in textual discourse. As Rogers Brubaker has pointed out, instead of focusing on nation as a substantial and enduring collectivity suitable for analysis, one should rather understand it as a category of practice that is in constant flux. Similarly, nationhood should be grasped as an institutionalized cultural and political form and nationness as a contingent event or happening (Brubaker 2000). Instead of “Which criteria defined the Uyghur nation?” perhaps the first research question should be “What were the features and contents of national practice in early modern Uyghur intellectual discourse?”

The examination of nation as a practice and type of discourse occurring within the broader context of the modernization process leads to the third central topic of this text: *national interest*. Here, the most important question this research aims to answer is “What did Uyghur intellectuals regard as desirable for their community?” Rephrased in national terminology, the question is “What did Uyghur intellectuals regard as national interest?” The second question aims to ascertain what values, concepts, and institutions were perceived by Uyghur intelligentsia as the aim of communal action. Rephrased in political terminology, the national interest of politically insovereign nations is inevitably tied to national movement and nationalism. The following study again loosely refers to several general interpretations and approaches to nationalism. Ernest Gellner defined nationalism as a political theory, contending that political units should overlap with national units. He also defined two other closely related terms. *National sentiment* is a sense of indignation arising when the objectives of nationalism are not fulfilled; in turn, such anger triggers a *nationalist movement* that strives to fulfill those objectives (Gellner 1983, 1). For John Breuilly, *nationalist argument* is a political doctrine based on the assumption that there exists a unique nation, that *national interests* and values have priority over all other interests and values, and that the nation must be politically sovereign. Breuilly’s research defined three kinds of oppositional relation between an existing state and a nationalist movement: separation, reform, and unification (1983, 2–10). Chapters 3 and 4 of this volume show that Breuilly’s categories of reformist and separatist nationalism, as well as the desired congruity of political and national borders, are applicable to the

Uyghur case, as well as his “intellectual interpretation” of nationalism and his examination of the role of intelligentsia in agitation to national and nationalist movements (1983, 48, 149–52). Chapter 4 also illustrates that the Uyghur nationalist agenda was closely related to the negotiation of an ethnic boundary, the maintenance of which has been interpreted as vital for a nation’s existence (Barth 1969, 14–15).

Miroslav Hroch’s chronology of nation-building processes in small European nations is also easily applicable to the process of the modern Uyghur national movement and its sense of nationalism. Hroch recognizes three key stages of the phenomenon: scholarly interest in ethnicity (Phase A), patriotic agitation (Phase B), and mass national movement (Phase C; 1996, 81–87). Similar to some European nations, Uyghurs in the early modern era were dominated by an exogenous ruling class; their titular nobility and elite existed, but they did not wield momentous political power. This research shows how, in this setting and also following a transfer of modernist thinking and nationalist ideology from abroad, a discourse of national identity arose within early modern intellectual circles of Xinjiang Turks and was followed by agitation aiming at a national awakening of the soon-to-be Uyghurs (comparable to Hrochian Phases A and Phase B). As beliefs, lineages, modes of life, customs, habits, and other collective attributes were forged into national symbols, the largely cultural movement eventually became politicized and transformed into a national movement (i.e., a movement bent on achieving all the attributes of a fully-fledged nation, similar to Hroch’s Phase B). The national movement of Xinjiang Turks became pointedly nationalist when interests of the nation gained priority over all other interests and attracted popular support. However, moments of such a deep and broad politically minded nationalist movement, which would resemble Hroch’s Phase C, have lasted for relatively brief moments throughout early modern Xinjiang history. In contrast with some of the European nations that are the object of Hroch’s research, the following examination outlines an emergence of national consciousness and its politicization of a nation which did not succeed in resolving the “plight of the ‘non-dominant’ ethnic group” (Hroch 1996, 80) in accordance with its hopes and desires. This book instead tells a story of a failed nationalist movement: Uyghurs are for now a stateless ethnic group ruled by another nation.

Sources and Methodology

This book seeks to employ the Uyghurological research approach and, therefore, prefers to examine texts penned by Uyghurs intellectuals. More precisely, it is primarily based on texts written by Xinjiang Turkic (or Uyghur) intellectuals

in their native language during the period circa 1900–49. A special effort is made to refer to sources which have not been previously examined. The sources analyzed by Sadri (1984), Forbes (1986), Newby (1986), Benson (1990, 1991, 1992), Rudelson (1991, 1997), Shinmen (2001), Brophy (2005), Bellér-Hann (2008), and Roberts (2009) are generally not closely examined beyond this introduction; however, they are occasionally included through reference to the above research. The uneven distribution of sources pertaining to types of discourse and their respective historical periods is caused mainly by the lack of availability of more texts. In fact, I analyzed all texts by late Qing and Republican indigenous Xinjiang settled Turkic Muslim intellectuals available to me throughout the research process, which continued until the summer of 2011. Covering a time, scope, and topic explored previously by Laura Newby (1986) and Andrew Forbes (1986), and more recently by Wang Ke (2013), this volume differs from their works in that it presents an analysis of a far larger number of indigenous sources, and it seeks to present a comprehensive outline of the evolution of Uyghur intellectual discourse of nation and nationalism from the late Qing dynasty to the CPC takeover.

One category of texts examined in this study is historiography. Chapter 1 refers to modern Uyghur versions of early twentieth century works by Molla Musa Sayrami (i.e., *Tarikhi Hemidi* [1988] and *Tarikhi Emuniye* [2000]). The methodological sin of not working with their original versions is due to the fact that significant argument concerning these texts has been already posited by Kim Hodong (2004) as well as by Laura Newby (2005, 2007). Chapter 1 of this book is more of a detailed elaboration on their theses than a whole new body of research. Chapters 3 and 4 refer to historiographies written by Muhemmed Imin Bughra (*Sherqiy Türkistan Tarikhi* 1998) and Polat Qadiri (*Ölke Tarikhi* 1948). Another category of sources are poems by Abdukhaliq Uyghur (*Abdukhaliq Uyghur Shé'irliri* [*Abdukhaliq Uyghur's Poems; AUP*] 2000), Memtili Tewpiq (*Memtili Ependi Shé'irliri* [*Memtili Ependi's Poems; MEP*] 2000) and by a writer about whom nothing further is known except his pseudonym, Uyghur Oghli, which means “Uyghur Son” (*Shé'irlar* 1948). Of these, poems by Abdukhaliq and Memtili have briefly been previously referred to (Schleussel 2009). An important bulk of sources includes periodicals issued either directly by governments or published under governmental auspices or by intellectuals affiliated with governments. One such category includes newspapers published in Kashgar during the insurgency, such as *Independence (Istiqlal; I)* of 1933; *Life of East Turkestan (Sherqiy Türkistan Hayati; LET)* of 1933; *Free Turkestan (Erkin Türkistan; FT)* of 1933–34, and after restoration of the provincial government's authority, particularly *New Life (Yéngi Hayat; NL)* of 1934–37. Of these newspapers, the first three have been used by Shinmen in his article (2001).

Previously unresearched articles published in periodicals run by intellectuals affiliated with the central government, particularly the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* (*Chiniy Türkistan Awazi*; *VCT*) of 1934, or with the second insurgent administration, *Revolutionary East Turkestan* (*Inqilabiy Sherqi Türkistan*; *RET*) of 1947–49, are also inspected. Several separately published shorter essays, journal articles, political speeches, pamphlets, and other miscellaneous documents by Nezerghoja Abdusémetov (*Yoruq Sahillar* 1991), Muhemmed Imin Bughra (*Yurt we Millet Heqqide Qelem Kürishi* 1948), Mes'ud Sabiri (*Bir Nutuq* 1947; *Türklük Orani* 1948) and Polat Qadiri (*Erk Shoari* n.d.) or by anonymous authors (*Kashgher Wilayet Hökümet Qurulushining Bayannamesi* in *Prints from Kashgar* [PFK] 1933, 9; *Kashgher Wilayitining Xingzhengzhang Mehkimisinde Turghuchi Sherqiy Türkistan Millet we Dölet Khizmetchisi Abdulrahman Efendi* in PFK 1935, 12; *Muhterem Duban Janablaridin Tiligram* in PFK 1937, 10; *Sherqiy Türkistandiki Barliq Musulmanlirimizgha Sherqiy Türkistan Merkiziyy Dinniye Nazaritidin Muraj'iet* by Religious Supervision [RS] 1948; *Qan Bedelige Kelgen Hoquqimizni Himaye Qilishqa Teyyarbiz* by the East Turkestan Revolutionary Youth Organization [ETRYO] 1947) are also analyzed; of these, articles by Abdusémetov have been analyzed before (Brophy 2005; Roberts 2009). The study of these primary sources is complemented by references to existing scholarship in Uyghur, Chinese, and English. The research, unfortunately, does not refer to writings of other important intellectuals, such as Abduqadir Damolla (lived 1862–1924), Hamidulla Muhammad Turfani (1983) or Lutpulla Mutellip (lived 1922–45; *Lutpulla Mutellip Eserliri* [Lutpulla Mutellip's Works; *LMW*] 1983), nor does it examine significant Tatar Jadidist periodicals of the 1910s and early 1920s, such as *Council* (*Shura*) or *Time* (*Waqit*), or newspapers printed by provincial authorities in the 1930s, such as the *Xinjiang Daily* (*Xinjiang Géziti*).

A special kind of source used in this examination is the memoir of an eye witness or participant to key events, namely those of Emin Wahidi (*Inqilab Khatirisi* 1938), Burhan Shehidi (*Xinjiangning 50 Yili*; Burhan 1986), Seypidin Ezizi (*Ömür Dastani. Eslime Bir. Zulum Zindanida* 1997a; *Ömür Dastani. Eslime Ikki. Tengritaghda Güldürmama* 1997b), Seydulla Seypullayov (*Men Shahid Bolghan Ishlar* 2005), and Yolwas (堯樂博士回憶錄 *Yáolè bóshì huíyìlù*; Yaole 1969). The memoirs are treated with certain caution in the following text. Besides the generic problem with “undisputable” eye-witness accounts, it is possible to doubt the authenticity of at least some of the views expressed in these texts simply because of the length of time between the event and the recording of the eye-witness account. If it is assumed that the closer a memoir is written to a particular event the more precise it is, then Emin Wahidi's rendering of the southern Xinjiang insurgency in the 1930s would be the most

authentic one from among these memoir sources because it was written a mere three years after the described events took place. Moreover, Wahidi wrote his account in the politically unconstrained environment of the East Turkestani diaspora in Afghanistan and was also a witness to and actor in the events described in the memoir. As a result, his text is treated as a source of research and as an artifact of genuine nation work.

Quite another case can be found in the memoirs of Burhan Shehidi and Seypidin Ezizi, important actors in pre-1949 Xinjiang events who themselves made many of the highest-level political decisions during that time. Their works are likely to be more or less fictionalized in a way similar to the “memoir” of Puyi (溥儀), the last emperor of China. On the other hand, it is also arguable that both Ezizi and Burhan were high enough in the PRC power hierarchy to be well aware of what was tolerated when put into writing, and they might also have had the influence to be able to publish what they themselves considered tolerable. This would make both memoirs fairly reliable. Similarly, the memoir of Seydulla Seypullayov, another high-ranking official in the second East Turkestan Republic (ETR) of 1944–49, underwent a very careful scrutiny before publication and therefore cannot be assumed to contain any sensitive information. On the other hand, this account is acclaimed by today’s Uyghur historians as one of the most informative and balanced sources published in Xinjiang. In contrast, the views expressed by Yolwas in his work show an interesting ideological compatibility with the KMT’s, especially Chiang Kai-shek’s theory of China’s nationality question. It seems, therefore, not out of question that Yolwas was not the actual author of at least some of the views in the memoir published under his name. Therefore, unlike Emin Wahidi’s memoir, those of Ezizi, Shehidi, and Yolwas are used in a way that has been described as a “raiding operation”—only isolated, relevant facts are extracted from them to be used as evidence or description (Watson 2000, 10), and they are not regarded as pieces of nation work.

Terminology and Transcriptions

A clarification should be made here concerning the historical periodization used throughout this book. The fact that during the initial period of Uyghur early modern history (1884–1912) Xinjiang was a part of the Qing Empire is reflected in the use of the term “late imperial” in reference to Xinjiang Turkic affairs, even though no historiography recognizes a period of Uyghur history that would be known as imperial, *per se*. Similarly, the term “early modern” is used in the text for the period being discussed (i.e., for the era between

the late Qing administration after 1884 and the CPC's taking control over Republican Xinjiang in 1949). This usage does not quite correspond to terminology used in the historiography of other regions, such as Europe from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries or China proper from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. As the following chapters nonetheless show, in Xinjiang it was only in the period of 1884–1949 that some features of modernity started to appear. And even in this period, the extent to which modernity spread throughout Xinjiang remained limited, and the indigenous Turkic milieu remained to function as “a basically preindustrial, agrarian social structure” (Bellér-Hann 2008, 11). The unorthodox application of the term “early modern” therefore seeks to reflect the fact that although certain modern concepts appeared and evolved in the unique Xinjiang context before 1949, it was only after its incorporation into the PRC that local Turkic society underwent substantial transformation, some aspects of which can be indeed understood as modernization. It should be also emphasized at this point that the periodization of Xinjiang's general history used throughout this book does not always overlap with that of the respective phases of discourse under examination. For instance, Chapter 1 draws on texts written in the 1900s, which are concerned mainly with historical events of the 1860s and the 1870s; similarly, Chapter 2 researches texts written mainly in the 1910s and 1920s, which came about as a result of events that started taking place in the 1880s.

Another explanation that should be made here addresses the pivotal concept of this book. In primary sources referred to invariably by the Arabic loanword “*millet*”, its English rendering evolves throughout the text from “nation” (Chapter 2 and 3) to “nationality” or “ethnic group” (Chapter 4). In other words, Uyghur language uses the term to denote an ethnic community that can be endowed with varying political status, as an unrecognized mass of colonial subjects, a sovereign and politically independent nation, or a recognized ethnic minority in a multiethnic state. *Millet* can thus be translated into English with several meanings. It will be demonstrated that the insurgent leaders of the first East Turkestan Republic, which lasted 1933–34, regarded their community as a *millet* (in this context most aptly translated into English as “nation”) intent on founding an independent nation-state. Conversely, Xinjiang's Turkic, nationally minded figures of the 1940s perceived their community as an ethnocultural *millet* (here most appropriately translated as “nationality”) which, along with a number of other *millet*, formed the political *millet* of China (“Chinese nation”). The practice of using a single term that can comfortably acquire a wide range of contextual connotations and translations (“nation,” “nationality,” “ethnic group,” “ethnocultural community,” and others in English; “*natsia*,” “*natsional'nost'*,” “*narod*,” “*etnicheskaya*

gruppa,” and others in Russian) is also common in other Central Asian Turkic languages with close ties to the Xinjiang Turkic milieu (namely Tatar and Uzbek). It also exists in the Chinese language, where the term 民族 *mínzú* can acquire various meanings according to context, and thus, also several translations into English (Leibold 2004, 166). However, in contrast to recent trends in English-language studies of China to directly introduce the Chinese term 民族 *mínzú* into English for denoting concepts such as “nation,” “minority nationality,” or “ethnic group,” this survey chooses to translate the term “*millet*” into English using contextually suitable, yet varying, terms.

Although the title of this book promises its contents are devoted to the “Uyghur discourse of nation and national interest,” the use of the word “Uyghur” in the title is at least partially anachronistic and is employed mainly for the sake of simplification. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 will demonstrate that the term “Uyghur” functioned as an autoethnonym only very sporadically in Xinjiang in the 1920s, that it was officially introduced only in the 1930s, and remained confined only to certain circles of Xinjiang Turkic intellectual milieu prior to 1949. This volume also shows that throughout the entire early modern period, a significant portion of Xinjiang Turkic intelligentsia described their community by autonyms such as “Muslim,” “East Turkestani,” “Turkestani,” or “Turk.” Therefore, the most correct term to refer to indigenous Xinjiang Turkic Muslim oasis-dwellers throughout the early modern period would be as early modern ancestors of a nationality today classified as Uyghur. In general, the text strives as much as possible to avoid this spasmodic phrase by respecting how this group is named in contemporary primary sources. Therefore, Chapter 1 tends to use the term *Musulman*, Chapter 2 calls this group Xinjiang Turkic Muslims, Chapter 3 uses the labels “East Turkestanis” and “Uyghurs,” and Chapter 4 employs the terms “Turk” and “Uyghur.” All these various terms, however, point unanimously to the single object of this research: the forefathers of today’s Uyghurs.

It was fascinating during the course of this project to observe the substantial changes that the language of the sources underwent from the early twentieth century until 1949. The language spoken in early modern times by Turkic Muslims of Xinjiang was very similar to languages spoken by other settled Turkic nationalities of Central Asia and reflected the common identity of Central Asian Muslim Turks. The language of the indigenous settled Turkic Muslims of Xinjiang can therefore be referred to as “Turki” or “Eastern Turki,” terms commonly used by foreign specialists and travelers to the region throughout the entire early modern period. Needless to say, the closeness of Uyghur to Uzbek and other languages of settled Turkic nationalities in Central Asia survives until today.

However, throughout the period under study, the language of the sources reflected an increase in specific Xinjiang characteristics. Natural language evolution in combination with deliberate policies resulted in an exciting process of the vernacularization of Eastern Turki. The language change is, in fact, a very particular reflection of the nationalization of a communal identity and interest of Xinjiang settled Turkic Muslims, as well as an emergence of a modern Uyghur national consciousness of which national language was a fundamental defining trait. The phenomenon is discernible in the orthography and language of sources from the early twentieth century examined in Chapter 1, which were written in very late Chaghatay and which contained a large number of Eastern Turki language characteristics. The language of the Taranchis, who were recognized since the 1930s as a separate nationality of northern Xinjiang, is used in sources for Chapter 2 and also treated as a variety of Uyghur, in much the same way as the Taranchis today are regarded as a subaltern community of Uyghurs. The localization process of Central Asian literary Turki gained momentum in the 1910s and 1920s, when the once substantial proportions of Persian and Arabic vocabulary decreased and was replaced by either Turkic words or Russian or Chinese loanwords (as explained in greater detail in Chapters 2, 3, and 4). Since the 1930s, the language of Xinjiang settled Turkic oasis-dwellers is specifically referred to as Uyghur in some sources. Some texts from the 1930s and 1940s are so close to the current vernacular that when read out loud, they sound as if they could be exclaimed today on the streets of Kashgar or Urumchi. At the same time, other Xinjiang intellectuals interestingly referred to the same language as Turki or Eastern Turki. The preoccupation of Xinjiang Turkic elites with language issues reveals its importance in their perception of national identity and interest. Unfortunately, this book touches insufficiently on the topic of the Uyghurization of the once common Turkic language spoken and written in the educated circles of Western and Eastern Turkestan.

Original Turkic/Uyghur terms and expressions are transcribed according to the contemporary Uyghur used in the anthology edited by Frederick Starr (Starr 2004, xi–xii). This anachronizing approach of rendering an early modern language practice into a transcription devised for a contemporary language was adopted partly for the sake of typographical convenience and partly to underline the above-discussed vernacularization process, as well as to emphasize the fact that there is a direct linear continuity between the language of the late imperial Xinjiang Turkic population and today's Uyghurs. But more importantly, this method was also chosen in reaction to the findings of this research. Because if language functions as a means to express human thought, a means that at the same time significantly informs and shapes these thoughts, then the

chosen transcription also underlines the development of certain themes in the thinking of Xinjiang Turkic elites from the beginning of the modern era until the present moment.

If not stated otherwise, the original terms and phrases in parentheses are in Uyghur or Chinese. The overwhelming majority of nouns (e.g., *musteqil*) or noun-derivations (e.g., *musteqilliq*) contained in the original Uyghur expressions come from Arabic; this fact is generally not pointed out. Toponyms contained in the sources are also transcribed according to today's use (i.e., "Yéngissar" as used today instead of "Yéngi Hissar" as used in the original sources). Some toponyms are written in their commonly known and slightly simplified forms, instead of their entirely correct forms (i.e., "Kashgar" instead of "Qeshqer," "Urumchi" instead of "Ürümchi"); commonly known terms in Chinese are treated in the same way (i.e., "Kuomintang" instead of "Guomindang"). Chinese proper names are generally transcribed without tone marks. Similarly, Chinese terms and loanwords appearing in the examined Turkic/Uyghur sources are transcribed according to today's *Hànyǔ pīnyīn*, not according to how they appear in the sources (i.e., "*Xinjiang*" and "*Huijiao*" instead of "*Shinjang*" and "*Khuyjo*"). Chinese characters are used throughout the text in their traditional forms when pertaining to pre-1949 concepts and in their simplified forms when related to PRC phenomena. Unless stated otherwise, passages from the sources have been translated by the author of this monograph, and they aspire to convey as precise a translation of the content and key words as possible.

Protonational Identity and Interest (c. 1900)

This opening chapter examines elite perceptions of protonational communal identity and interest as manifested by Turkic Muslims in late Qing Xinjiang (during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries). Detailing Kim Hodong's previous reading of two historiographical texts written by Molla Musa Sayrami (2004), this chapter looks into how these texts describe forces acting toward and against Xinjiang Turkic Muslims' feeling and acting as a unified community in the late premodern era. It also observes aspects such as a shared mythology, descent, history, culture, territory, linguistic ties, and sense of belonging and identifies a number of ways and contexts in which Xinjiang Turkic Muslims cogitated and acted as an ethnic community similar to modern nations. At the same time, this chapter also illustrates that in other contexts their protonational centripetal dynamics, which reinforced communal identity and action, did not necessarily prevail over other communal loyalties and interests, such as local or factional objectives. Although this entire study strives to refrain from an anachronistic projection of a national lens onto premodern times and of general theories of nation-formation and nationalist movement onto the Uyghur case, it also does not resign from the quest for predecessors of features of modern nations and nationalism in premodern times and in a non-Western context. In other words, this chapter seeks to ascertain predecessors of a modern Uyghur national identity and nationalism in a premodern setting.

1.1 Qing Administration and Muslim Rebellion (1759–1878)

The conquest of the region today called Xinjiang (Figure 1.1 [Map of Xinjiang]) by the Qing dynasty in the mid-eighteenth century was an epochal moment from several points of view. This projection of the Qing imperial mandate onto Central Asia was yet another phase of a complex empire-building process, which had started in the late sixteenth century with Nurhaci and Manchu ethnogenesis and based its legitimacy on even earlier Jurchen and Mongol conquest empires of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The result was an empire of massive territorial expanse that largely exceeded those of the revered Han and Tang dynasties. The subsequent Qing administration and development of Xinjiang was also an ingenious elaboration on previously established patterns of rule over the region by various ethnopolitical powers during the course of

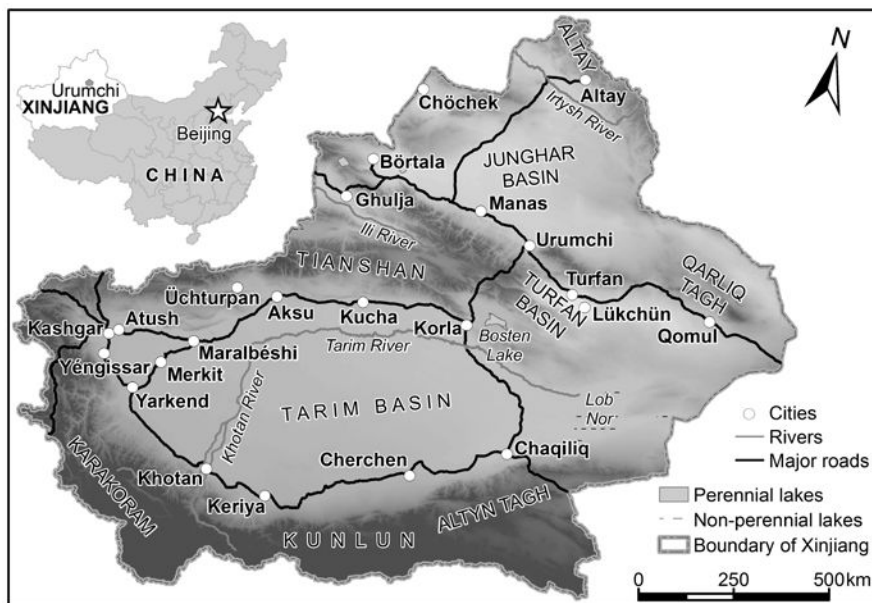


FIGURE 1.1 *Map of Xinjiang*

Displaying current borders, roads and cities. Authors: Adam Horálek and Ondřej Klimeš.

more than 2500 years. Qing rule in Xinjiang coalesced with the unprecedentedly changing nature of the Chinese imperial polity, with modernity in the surrounding regions and with the emergence of a new world order. In this sense, the Qing administration of Xinjiang functioned as an immediate predecessor and model for successive Republican and Communist governments and laid the cornerstone of modern and contemporary Xinjiang reality. Qing policy thus naturally generated potent stimuli for the formation of what later became the modern Uyghur national consciousness and nationalism.

The Manchu elimination of Junghars in northern Xinjiang and the appropriation of the Tarim Basin by 1760 both occurred as annexations of the region by preceding China-based dynasties. It was the Western Han (西漢; 206 BC–9 AD) who were the first to resort to a campaign against a hostile nomadic power centered in Jungharia and opportunely also took control of the oases in the Tarim Basin, which the nomads were exploiting in tax, harvest, production, and labor. Han Wudi (武帝; ruled 141–87 BC) was pressed into a campaign against the Xiongnu (匈奴), who were proto-Turkic nomads who subdued the various Iranian-speaking peoples of present day Xinjiang, namely the Sakas of the Tarim Basin as well as the Yuezhi (月氏) and Wusun (烏孫) of the Jungharian Basin, for economic reasons throughout the second half of first

millennium BC. In order to weaken the Xiongnu's economic and agricultural base, the Han wrestled control from the Xiongnu beginning in 120 BC of varying portions of fertile Tarim Basin oases and parts of Jungharia, temporarily establishing the Western Regions protectorate (西域都護府 *Xīyù dūhùfǔ*) that lasted from 60 BC until the first decade AD. Millennia later, it was the Junghars under the khanship of Galdan (ruled until 1697), who had defied the Qing authority along the northwestern border since the rule of the Kangxi emperor (康熙, ruled 1662–1722). It remained up to the Qianlong emperor (乾隆, ruled 1736–95) to deal ultimately with the Junghar menace. After power struggles developed among the Junghar nobility after 1745, Amursana (d. 1757) emerged as the leader and challenged the Qing authority by claiming khanship over all Junghar tribes. In a series of campaigns north of the Tianshan, Qianlong conquered the Junghar territory and massacred almost all the population of Junghar tribes, while Amursana fled to Russian territory where he died of smallpox. The moment of the Junghar khanate's elimination constitutes the end of a legacy of great inner-Asian nomadic empires dominated by elites of Chinggisid origin between the late twelfth and mid-eighteenth centuries (Millward 2009, 268–71; Di Cosmo 351–52).

With the campaign against the polity in Jungharia, the Qing, like their Han and Tang predecessors, were presented with an opportunity to extend their domination southward of the Tianshan Range over the Tarim Basin oases. Between 1348 and 1514, the region had been ruled as a part of Moghulistan (meaning Mongolia), a realm established by the Chaghatayid Tughluq Temür Khan (ruled 1348–63) and delimited roughly by the Altay range, Lake Balkhash, Komul, Ferghana Valley, and the Karakoram (Sayrami 1988, 714). Moghulistan was succeeded by the Seyyidid dynasty (1514–1680), dominated by the Chinggisid Dughlat clan. But already from the early seventeenth century, the dominion had been gradually decomposing into a cluster of autonomous city states governed by Naqshbandi Sufi clerics (*khojas*) and clans (namely the antagonistic Afaqi and Ishaqi lineages) competing for political dominance. The administrative fragmentation of oases that were culturally and historically very closely related is perhaps best reflected in the region's name in original sources—*Yette Sheher* or *Yettishahr* (from Turkic and Persian, respectively, and meaning “Seven Cities” or “Heptapolis”) and *stricto sensu* pertaining to oases around the Tarim Basin, excluding Jungharia and eastern Xinjiang.¹

1 There are several variants of the list of respective cities. A modern Xinjiang scholar lists the respective cities as Kashgar, Yarkend, Khotan, Aksu, Kucha, Korla, and Üchturpan, and alternately as Kashgar, Yarkend, Khotan, Aksu, Kucha, Korla, and Yéngissar (Sayrami 1988, 717). Another term for the area is Six Cities (*Alte Sheher*), often rendered into English as “Altishahr”

The Junghars' eventual submission of the fragmented oasis *poleis* to the administration and exploitation of a single ruler by 1680 had inadvertently paved the way for the Qing mandate in Yettishahr. After eliminating the Junghars and through a combination of military might and diplomacy, the Qing managed to defeat the descendants of pre-Junghar Afaqi khojas, who were still claiming legitimacy over Yettishahr, and occupied the oases. In December 1759, the Qianlong emperor announced the achievement of "eternal peace and security on the borders," and by the end of the eighteenth century, the region had come to be called Xinjiang, meaning "New Frontier" or "New Dominion" (新疆; Millward 1998, 29–32; Millward 2009, 271–73; Di Cosmo 2009, 351–52).² The conquest of Yettishahr as "a by-product of the Junghar campaigns" (Perdue 2005, 291–92) was yet another preemptive projection of a China-based power's authority onto inner-Asian nomads in a way that was structurally identical to the pattern outlined above.

Other recurring historical patterns and mechanisms of statehood were revived by the Qing administration of Xinjiang. In order to deal with the enormous ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of an unprecedentedly vast empire, the Qianlong emperor was obliged to institute correspondingly intricate legitimization measures. One of these concepts was "universality" of imperial power, also termed "simultaneous emperorship" (Crossley 1999, 11). The Qing drew inspiration in ruling respective ethnocultural realms within the empire under different sets of rules from previous conquest dynasties, mainly the Jin (金, 1115–1234) and the Yuan (元, 1271–1378). In accordance with his era title, meaning "Supported by Heaven," the Qianlong emperor posed himself as the cultic pivot for each of the five main ethnoreligious entities within the empire: Manchu (滿 *Mǎn*), Mongol (蒙 *Měng*), Han (漢 *Hàn*), Tibetan (藏 *Zàng*), and Turkic (回 *Huí*). Thus, by performing traditional shamanistic rituals and worshipping Heaven, he remained the ruler of Manchus. By adopting the titles Son of Heaven (天子 *Tiānzǐ*) and Sage-King (聖王 *Shèngwáng*), by adopting neo-Confucian orthodoxy and methods of rule, by performing Chinese state rituals, by promoting the worship of folk hero/war god Guan Di

(e.g., Millward 1998 and Newby 2005). Foreign academicians and travelers have also provided several alternative lists (for an overview, see Bellér-Hann 2008, 39). The term *Yettishahr* used throughout this book respects both the terminology of original sources and usage by other specialists (e.g., Kim 2004, 15). The region is also sometimes often referred to as Kashgaria (e.g., Kuropatkin 1882).

2 Other Qing terms were the nostalgic name Western Region (西域), Muslim Frontier (回疆 *Huíjiāng*), Muslim Region or Muslim Tribes (回部 *Huíbù*), Junghar Region or Junghar Tribes (準部 *Zhǔnbù*), etc.

(關帝), and by accepting other institutions of Chinese civilization and statecraft, the Manchu ruler successfully appealed to the Han. Previously, the Qing had also procured the Yuan imperial seal (“state-transmission seal,” 傳國璽 *chuánguóxǐ*) and the title Khan from Chakhar Mongols, thus gaining legitimacy for the Mongols. For both Tibetans and Mongols, Qianlong became a legitimate ruler by posing as the reincarnation of *bodhisattva* Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri, and the king turning the Wheel of the Law (Sanskrit *chakravartin*, 轉輪 *zhuǎnlún*), by adopting the cult of the war god Mahakala and of popular hero Geser, as well as by accepting the spiritual guidance of Tibetan clergy and presenting himself as the patron of faith, which was a pattern that existed in Tibeto-Mongol relations since the Yuan dynasty (Rawski, 1998 197–263; Crossley 1999, 225–46; Slobodník 2007, 21–22). The complex strategy of simultaneous emperorship is also perceptible in the use of six kinds of scripts (Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian, Tibetan, Oirat, and Arabic) in some instances of official communication (Perdue 2005, 430–31). Such a universalist approach elaborated substantially on the Chinese traditional culturalist perception of the world as one composed of concentric circles, where in the center of the civilized world stands Chinese culture (華夏文化 *Huáxià wénhuà*), which is surrounded by non-Chinese ethnic groups, whose level of cultural development decreases with growing distance from the central cultural sphere (Fairbank 1968, cover). Instead, the Qing emperor was to function as a center of the universe consisting of five equally civilized ethnocultural realms, each administered under different rules (Millward 1998, 201).

Establishing a sacral connection between the Qing emperor and Islamic ritual practice was a more complicated issue. Obviously, the emperor could not proclaim himself God or a reincarnation of the Prophet, nor could he convert to Islam. Qianlong’s title *khaqan* (khan of khans), his claim to Chingissid lineage, and his claim to Mongol-style universalism boasted formidable prestige among the Turkic population of Yettishahr. This prestige was, strictly speaking, unrelated to Islam because its very origin lay in the pre-Islamic title *kaghan* held by Turkic and Uyghur rulers in the sixth through the ninth centuries. It has been also pointed out that while to a certain degree Turkic Muslims of Xinjiang had no issue with recognizing the *khaqani Chin* as the universal ruler, the fact that this legitimizing posture rested largely on military supremacy posed a problem, considering the decline in military prowess of the Qing garrison (Newby 2005, 42, 120). Similarly, occasional instances of the Qing authority using Chaghatay written in sacred Arabic script in official multilingual inscriptions, dictionaries, and encyclopedias; of official patronage to build the Sulayman mosque (*Emin Munar*, 伊敏塔 *Yīmín tǎ*) in Turfan (Millward and Newby 2006, 120); of tax exemption on the property of religious endowments (*waqf*); and of sporadic appointment of guardians to khojas’ sacred shrines

(Fletcher 1978a, 75) were hardly enough to convince the Muslims of the Qing administration's endorsement of Islam. Yet the much more significant measure, by which the non-Muslim Qing could gain approval from their Muslim subjects, was effective government, that is, peace, prosperity, and the "rule of justice" (*adalet*; Kim 2004, 70). Thus, although not an issue by itself, in a time of mismanagement and abuse of power by the exogenous ruling elite, "the court's failure to develop an Islamic voice" (Newby 2005, 252) customarily became a powerful factor pouring oil onto the fire of Muslim revolt. The inflammatory potential of a religious breach between a ruler and the ruled constituted a factor that was bound to repeatedly inflame the Xinjiang Muslims' anger over the dysfunctional administration of Republican and Communist China to the point of mass communal violence.

In accordance with the principle of simultaneous statecraft, the Qing authority also introduced a different system of administration for the five ethnocultural entities (因俗而治 *yīnsú ér zhì*; literally, "rule in accordance with customary practice") of the empire. Thus, Manchus all over the Qing Empire were organized into banners (旗 *qí*), supplemented by Mongol and Han banners. Tribes of today's Inner and Outer Mongolia formed another type of banner (旗 *qí*). Inner China was to consist of eighteen provinces (省 *shěng*) controlled by governors-general and governors. In Tibet, the Qing ruled indirectly via local institutions under the supervision of a resident high official (Ma. *amban*; Ch. 大臣 *dàchén*). Manchuria was to be preserved by the prohibition of Han immigration into the isolated sanctuary of Manchu culture. Some regions (e.g., tribal areas in the southwest or the Kokonur) were also ruled indirectly through the late Song system of local chiefs (土司 *tǔsī*).³ Such administrative policies instituted an ingenious and sophisticated system of segregation and stratification of various ethnic and social groups that was palpable in virtually all spheres of Qing life. Many elements of this "Manchu apartheid" originated in Liao (遼, 907–1125), Jin (金, 1115–1234), and Yuan practice. This system of rule provided for some autonomy of local affairs in frontier areas, while simultaneously instituting distinction and separation between the conqueror and conquered and upholding "ethnic sovereignty" (組群主權 *zúqún zhǔquán*) of a conquest elite "essential to the vitality of all Inner Asian dynasties" (Elliott 2001, 6, 98–116, 197–216). At the same time, it was these divisive policies that

3 Until the establishment of *Zongli Yamen* (總理衙門 *Zǒnglǐ yámén*) in 1861, relations between the Manchu court and the rulers and elites of territories located to the north and northwest (such as today's Mongolia, Tibet, Xinjiang, and also Russia) were under the jurisdiction of the Court of Colonial Affairs (理藩院 *Lǐfān yuàn*), whereas tributary relations with vassals from the east to the southwest were managed by the Board of Rites (禮部 *Lǐbù*; Di Cosmo 2009, 354–62).

stimulated social, cultural, and economic changes in the peripheries that encouraged the growth of ethnic identities. . . . Under the Qing rule, the focus of primary identities had begun to shift from tribal units to larger social groups. (Rawski 1998, 301)

In another words, the negotiation of identity in the Qing period shifted from the cultural via the racial to the ethnic arena (Crossley 1990, 8).

In Xinjiang, one strong stimulus toward formation of a proto-national communal consciousness among the local Turkic Muslim population included the Qing methods of rule, some of which had been actually introduced by the Junghars. In particular, the Qing continued the Junghar model of ruling Jungharia, Turfan, and the Tarim Basin as a single polity under one administration. Xinjiang was turned into a military agency (軍府 *jūnfǔ*), and the General of Ili (伊犁將軍 *Yīlí jiàngjūn*) acted as the highest-ranking official for the whole territory. Xinjiang was further partitioned into three administrative units: Jungharia was named the Circuit to the North of Tianshan (天山北路 *Tiānshān běilù*, also called the Northern Circuit), oases along the Tarim Basin were called the Circuit to the South of Tianshan (天山南路 *Tiānshān nánlù*, also known as the Southern Circuit or Eight Cities of the Southern Circuit 南路八城 *Nánlù bāchéng*),⁴ and the area from today's Urumchi to Komul and Barköl was called the Circuit to the East of Tianshan (天山東路 *Tiānshān dōnglù*, also called the Eastern Circuit). All three divisions were subordinate to the General of Ili in military matters; he was also the highest authority in civil matters for the Northern Circuit. The Manchu population of the Northern and Eastern Circuits was divided into banners. Civilians of the Eastern Circuit fell under the jurisdiction of the governor of the Gansu province. Turfan was thus the only oasis in Yettishahr that had its population divided into banners (Perdue 2005, 332), while the rulers of Turfan, Komul, and Lükchün were awarded the Qing titles of *jasak junwang* (札薩克郡王 *zhásàkè jūnwáng*) or *wang* (王 *wáng*) for their contributions to the Qing conquest.

As elsewhere within the empire, in Xinjiang the Qing practiced division and segregation of respective segments of the population. Han and Tungan civilian immigration was initially confined to only the Northern and Eastern Circuits. Even after 1831, when limits on immigration to Xinjiang were officially removed, the Han and Tungan settlers were governed by magistrates in a system identical to that of interior China. The remaining noncolonist

4 The Eight Cities of the Southern Circuit can be further subdivided into the four eastern cities of Aksu, Üchturpan, Kucha, and Qarashahr and the four western cities of Kashgar, Yéngissar, Yarkend, and Khotan (Bellér-Hann 2008, 39).

population of Xinjiang was also segregated into separate residences—bannermen (旗人 *qírén*) and Han (漢人 *Hànrén*) usually occupied two distinct parts of a newly founded municipality that was customarily called the New City, whereas the original city was inhabited by local Muslims and known as the Old City. Another measure was the revival of the policy called “reclaiming land while protecting the frontier” (屯墾戍邊 *túnkěn shùbiān*), which consisted of the gradual movement of commissioned military troops to establish agricultural colonies known as 屯田 *túntián*.⁵ This technique had been used by the Han and was later revived by the Tang (唐; 618–907), who, in spite of being in a constant state of war with Turks and Tibetans, had used the colonies to manage a protectorate called the Pacified West (安西 *Ānxī*) between the 640s and 750s (Millward 2007, 25–39; Soucek 2000, 51–53). The Qing reintroduced this practice in the Northern and Eastern Circuits by founding military colonies (兵屯 *bīngtún*, 軍屯 *jūntún*), civilian colonies of immigrants from the interior (戶屯 *hùtún*, 民屯 *míntún*), colonies of Yettishahr Muslims that were resettled to the Northern Circuit (回屯 *huítún*), and convict colonies (遣屯 *qiǎntún*, 犯屯 *fàntún*; Kim 2004, 15–17; Di Cosmo 2009, 352–53; Millward and Newby 2006, 118–23).

The Southern Circuit, which had an overwhelmingly Turkic Muslim population, was subjected to an intricate set of indirect rule policies. There was a relatively small military deployment of some five to six thousand personnel (Kim 2004, 16), due to the fact that oases along the brink of the Tarim Basin could not support a larger population. The Qing also copied the Junghar mechanism of investing the indigenous hereditary ruling class (*beks*) with lower administration powers, which created the “beg system” (伯克制 *bókè zhì*). There existed approximately thirty-five different beg titles, such as the “governor of a district” (*hakim beg*), “assistant to the governor” (*ishikagha beg*), “treasurer” (*kha-zanachi beg*), or “administrator of irrigation and water distribution” (*mirab beg*). Beks were incorporated into the official ranking system (品級 *pǐnjí*) and were also entitled to cultivated land and people to toil it, to financial stipends, to present tribute to the emperor, to trade at the border with China proper or in the capital, to braid their hair into a queue, to wear Qing official attire, to prostrate themselves in front of the emperor, and other privileges. There also existed a complicated rotation system for beks on official posts within Yettishahr. Furthermore, the Qing also relied on a semiofficial category of functionaries called “heads” (*bash*). Their principal task was to assist beks in tax

5 Military colonies with substantial agricultural bases called *jīng* (京) existed at least as early as the Western Zhou dynasty (西周, 1046–771 BC), and use of this mechanism for military expansion was used also by the Qin (秦) state during the late Warring States period (戰國, 475–221 BC).

collection. Their titles included “head of a thousand households” (*mingbashi*), “head of a hundred households” (*yüzbashi*), and “supervisor of agriculture” (*kökbashi*). Apart from that, there were numerous other minor officials, such as interpreters (*tungchi*), couriers (*chekchi*), or scribes (*bichikchi*). Finally, the Qing also left the system of Muslim religious administration intact. Local educated clerisy (*‘ulama*) remained in charge of educational and some judicial matters that were decided according to Islamic law (*shari’a*; Kim 2004, 12–14; Newby 1998, 282–84).

The system of indirect rule was designed to secure considerable autonomy in local affairs and ensure the indigenous Muslims would be tolerant of the Qing mandate. As mentioned previously, along with the Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans, and the Han, the Muslims of Yettishahr were considered one the five legitimate constituencies of the empire. Therefore, shortly after the conquest, the Qing administration dropped the derogative denomination of Muslims (character 回 written with the dog radical; Millward 1998, 194). From then on, Muslims were called by the politically correct term *Huimin* (回民 *Huímín*) or *Huizi* (回子 *Huízi*, both meaning “Muslim”).⁶ Thus, in the initial decades after the conquest, the Qing “steppe imperialism with Chinese characteristics” did not promote Chinese political and cultural forms in Xinjiang, nor did it seek to assimilate the Xinjiang population (Millward and Newby 2006, 114–17). The result was a sort of *pax Manjurica* that availed Xinjiang with relative stability and prosperity until the early nineteenth century (Fletcher 1968, 220; Millward 1998, 248). And it was the early Qing policies—often directly adopted from the Junghars—such as unification of Xinjiang under one administration; rotation of begs within Yettishahr; movement of officials, troops, agricultural workers, and criminals within Xinjiang; and other methods of rule that laid the fundamental framework for the emerging self-perceptions of the indigenous Turkic dwellers of Yettishahr as a single community.

Within some fifty years, however, the early Qing administration patterns and modalities of enforcement revealed their limits. After the demise of the Qianlong emperor in the late eighteenth century, the diminishing prowess

6 Sometimes the term “Turban-Head Muslim” (纏頭回 *Chántóu huí*, 纏頭 *Chántóu*, or 纏回 *Chánhuí*) was also used to distinguish Xinjiang Turkic Muslims from the Chinese-speaking “Han-Muslims” (漢回 *Hàn-Huí*), who were sometimes called also “Interior Muslims” (內地回民 *nèidì Huímín*), in other words, ancestors of modern Hui nationality (回族). The term Turban-Head Muslim refers to white headscarves (*selle*, 散蘭 *sànlán*) worn by Xinjiang Turkic Muslims of high religious status or who were older in age and later came to have derogatory connotations (see following chapters).

of Qing administrators, and the failure of the dynasty to institute substantial social and economic reforms allowed for extortion and abuse of power by the begs. Despite burgeoning foreign trade, the economic situation of the local populace worsened. The lack of enforcement of official embargo on trading and money lending by Han merchants in villages, as well as on appropriations of arable and grazing land by the Qing garrison in Yettishahr, triggered revolts by Yettishahr Muslims, revolts such as the Ziya al-Din incident of 1815 (Newby 2005, 74–75). The situation within Xinjiang coalesced with ineffective Qing policies in Khoqand, where exiled khojas' descendants still harbored ambitions for reconquest, which were strengthened by religious justification. Indeed in 1826–27, khoja Jahangir and his followers crossed from Khoqand to Yettishahr and temporarily ousted the Qing forces, receiving fervent support from Yettishahr Muslims and establishing dominance over Kashgar, Yéngissar, Yarkend, and Khotan. The khoja claim and Islamic creed was further exploited during numerous small-scale incursions, such as that of khoja Yúsuuf (1831), the Seven Khojas (1847), Wali Khan (1857), and others (Newby 2005, 93–101, 153–63, 223–26, 236–37; Kim 2004, 31).

Jahangir's and Yusuf's campaigns and partial loss of Xinjiang prompted the Qing to adopt a change in Xinjiang policy after 1831. On a central level, literati and policymakers engaged in lengthy debates on how to incorporate Xinjiang more closely into the Qing Empire, but showed little concern for actual improvement in the governance of the Muslim populace (Millward 1998, 241–45; Newby 2005, 106–17). In fact, it was in this period that the Qing's universalistic governance and parallel emperorship approach changed to an integrationist policy (Millward 1998, 225–31). Unlike during the preceding universalistic period of Qing imperial statecraft, at least from the early 1830s on, "Xinjiang was not only part of China, it was becoming Chinese" and ceased to pose in both Qing and Han statecraft imagery as a permeable frontier annex, but rather as "increasingly woven into the mental and physical fabric of the empire" (Newby 2005, 112, 122). In retrospect, this Qing policy shift can be seen as significant to Xinjiang's development as a Qing annexation of the region itself.

As a result of this policy shift, the Qing started to formulate their Xinjiang policy more in relation to an external threat than to dire internal conditions. As mentioned above, one example of this approach is shown in the fact that from 1831, non-Muslim troops and civilians from the interior were allowed to settle on land acquired either by agricultural colonization or by lease. But this measure, which was essentially aimed at improving control over Yettishahr by altering the demographic composition of its population, in fact paradoxically

strengthened the very same communal tensions that had led to local dissatisfaction prior to the khojas' campaigns. The economic situation in Xinjiang also worsened after a series of events in the interior—an outbreak of natural disasters in the 1840s and uprisings in the 1850s. The repercussions for Xinjiang were rising numbers of Han and Tungan migrants, reduced fiscal subsidy from the central government, and increased taxation (Millward 1998, 225; Kim 2004, 30). These factors further contributed to the deterioration of the already compromised relationship between Yettishahr Muslims and their Qing administrators. Small-scale local revolts started to erupt in the 1840s and 1850s, along with disease epidemics (Newby 2005, 233–35; Kim 2004, 35).

Although based almost exclusively on Qing archival materials, Laura Newby's study of the interplay of Qing, Yettishahr Muslim, khoja, and Khoqandi agendas during uprisings and invasions that had occurred since the 1820s does shed light on patterns of communal identity and interest in the Xinjiang Turkic population after a century of Qing administration. The Qing's establishment of Xinjiang as a single administrative unit, the resettlement of Turkic peasants from Yettishahr to Jungharia, a tolerant system of indirect rule, meager efforts of the empire to pose as a religious sponsor, and other centripetal trends inevitably strengthened the religious identity of Xinjiang Turkic Muslims. The Qing did not even exploit the traditional Chinese statecraft approach to alien subjects—the strategy of “using barbarians to control other barbarians” (以夷制夷 *yǐ Yí zhì Yí*, also 以夷治夷 *yǐ Yí zhì Yí*)—in their rule of Yettishahr Muslims, which led to the erosion of the Afaqi and Ishaqi followers' animosity. And in accordance with the previously mentioned inflammatory potential of Islam, the religious issue and the authority of local saintly lineages became catalysts for violent reactions of Yettishahr Turkic Muslims to the Qing misadministration. At the same time, the Yusuf incursion (1831), the Seven Khojas' incursion (1847), and the Wali Khan's incursion (1857) revealed the mixed reception of military campaigns to Yettishahr by exiled khojas under Khoqandi support. Notably, although these invasions were carried out under the flag of Islam for the purpose of recovering Yettishahr from infidel hands, they did not necessarily elicit a passionate welcome by the Yettishahr Muslims. In fact, the khojas' and Khoqandis' draconian administration and Islamic fanaticism showed that despite a common religious cause, Yettishahr Turkic interests often quite substantially diverged from those of exiled khoja clans as well as the Khoqandi military, government, and merchant strata (Newby 2005, 153–63, 223–26, 233–38). One of the many conclusions that can be drawn from Newby's study is that during the one hundred years after the conquest of Yettishahr in the early 1860s, the Qing managed to establish Xinjiang as a nonnegotiable part of the Chinese polity, but Qing dysfunctional administration also stimulated

the emergence of a self-aware and dissatisfied population of Xinjiang Turkic Muslims (Newby 2005, 256–57).

During the 1860s, the deterioration in economic and social conditions in Yettishahr erupted into a series of events that eventually led to the Qing's utter loss of control over Xinjiang. The Qing authority first collapsed in Kucha, where in 1864 Tungsans rebelled and, joined by the Turkic Muslim majority in the oasis, massacred the Qing officials, soldiers, and merchants living within the city. Turkic Muslims soon gained prominence in the movement and installed Rashidin Khoja as the leader of the uprising. In short succession, similar revolts and massacres erupted in five other major cities of Xinjiang (Urumchi, Yarkend, Kashgar, Khotan, and Ghulja), ridding the region of Qing administration and also of most of the non-Muslim population. The Kuchean regime aspired to bring the isolated uprisings under its control but failed militarily, arguably due to the chaotic formation and lack of military training of its troops (Kim 2004, 1–7, 37–61). Almost simultaneously in early 1865, Khoqandi ruler Alim Quli sent his official, Yaqup Beg, as an agent to oversee yet another attempt at a khoja incursion into Yettishahr, this time by Buzurg Khoja. After the arrival of the khoja party in Kashgar, Yaqup Beg soon showed his tactical skills and aspirations by usurping leadership of the campaign and warring successfully with Kuchean and other local rebel regimes throughout Yettishahr; he ultimately became the ruler of Yettishahr under titles that implied divine blessing. By the summer of 1872, Yaqup Beg's domain reached to Urumchi and Manas in the north and Turfan and Lükchün in the east (Kim 2004, 83–97). In combination with Russia's annexation of Xinjiang's Ili Valley in 1870–81, which was partially effected as a preemptive measure against Yaqup Beg's potential aspirations, the Muslim rebellion in Xinjiang resulted in the Qing loss of control of a substantial part of the empire.

Yaqup Beg's rule came to a swift end due to several causes. One was the lack of sufficient secular and religious legitimacy, which Yaqup Beg did not manage to acquire even through efforts at centralization in his government or strict enforcement of Islam. Reliance on Khoqandi officials, extortion, and corruption also failed to generate the support of Xinjiang Turks (Kim 2004, 98–137). And although Yaqup Beg was aware of the changing geopolitical situation in Central Asia and established stabilized relations with Russia and Great Britain, the two powers resolved not to interfere in the conflict between Yaqup Beg's regime and the Qing dynasty. Yaqup Beg's endorsement by the Ottoman Empire remained merely symbolic (Kim 2004, 138–58). Thus, after the Qing forces, commanded by Zuo Zongtang (左宗棠, 1812–85), were able to suppress the Tungan rebellion in northwestern China in 1873, and after the initial debate in Qing policy-making circles whether or not to reconquer Xinjiang was

settled,⁷ Zuo Zongtang and his troops embarked on a campaign against Yaqup Beg. Despite Muslim efforts to resist the imperial troops, the Qing advanced without great difficulty and was even aided by the sudden death of Yaqup Beg on May 29, 1877, in Korla. After his death, the subjugation of the leaderless Muslim polity was a quick matter for Zuo Zongtang. The reconquest of Xinjiang was completed by the second day of January 1878 (Kim 2004, 164–78). Under the provisions of the Treaty of St. Petersburg (1881), the Qing also recovered the eastern part of the Ili valley that had been annexed by Russia. Thus, Muslim unrest that had lasted from the 1810s was ended, Xinjiang was reincorporated into the Qing polity, and the territorial integrity of the dynasty was reestablished.

Although Kim Hodong's detailed study is concerned primarily with the factual unfolding of the Muslim rebellion between 1864 and 1877, his research also dealt with patterns of communal identity and action by the Xinjiang Turkic Muslims. He argued that despite the fact that in the initial phase of the rebellion Islam functioned as a unifying mobilization factor for a discontented population, it soon lost its mobilizing potential after the Qing administration and non-Muslims were annihilated and when the disparate social and ethnic groups, all led by personages claiming religious authority and saintly lineage, collided in the form of open warfare. In the second stage, despite the proclaimed "Islamic" and "holy" character of the rebellion, the seizure of power by Yaqup Beg and the Khoqandi misadministration of Yettishahr accelerated the divide of interests between Xinjiang Turks and other Muslim groups (particularly the Khoqandis), which had been forming prior to the uprising due to the declining appeal of the khoja cause and the disastrous effects of khoja and Khoqandi incursions from the 1820s (Kim 2004, 67–71). Kim also pointed out that another dynamic of divergence between the Muslims of Xinjiang and Yaqup Beg's administration was religious observance—the Khoqandis' strict religious regime did not go together with Yettishahris' habits of wearing skull caps, drinking alcohol, smoking narcotics or tobacco, singing, dancing, and playing music in public (Kim 2004, 129–31). In short, the unfolding of the

7 The side in favor of giving up vast, barren, and restive Xinjiang, which moreover required massive regular central subsidy, was represented by Li Hongzhang (李鴻章, 1823–1901), the Governor-General of Zhili (直隸) province and one of the leading promoters of the maritime defense of China. The opposing side represented by Zuo Zongtang, himself another prominent figure of Qing technical modernization who gained merit by the previous suppression of Taiping (太平) and Nian (捻) rebellions throughout China, argued for the reconquest of Xinjiang in order to use the territory as a buffer against the territorial expansion of Great Britain and Russia into Mongolia and, eventually, the capital (known as the so-called domino theory; Millward 2007, 125–27; Kim 2004, 161–63).

rebellion suggests that in the late imperial era the Xinjiang Turkic Muslims were very well aware of their communal identity and interest. Similarly, Laura Newby has previously argued that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Xinjiang “Turkic Muslims of Altä Shähär were bound by a clear sense of who they were not” and also briefly discussed “elements of shared geography, historical experience, and culture that defined who they were” (Newby 2007, 22).

1.2 Historiography of Molla Musa Sayrami (1900s)

A more detailed elaboration on the arguments of Kim Hodong and Laura Newby is useful before continuing on into the following chapters, which probe into the early modern Uyghur elites’ perceptions of nation and national interest. The two sources under examination are historiographical works, *Tarikhi Eminiyë* (1904, 2000; in Chaghatay, *Tārīkh-i Amniyya*) and *Tarikhi Hemidi* (1988; in Chaghatay, *Tārīkh-i Hamīdī*), written by Molla Musa Sayrami. Probably born in Sayram near Aksu on August 23, 1836, as the first son of a wealthy and educated landowner and religious scholar, Molla Eysa Khoja, Musa attended the Sayram secondary learning institute (*madrasa*) from the age of seven.⁸ Owing to his outstanding talent and beautiful handwriting, Musa soon became known as the “Baby Scholar” (*Bala Molla*) or “Musa the Scholar” (*Molla Musa*). From 1847, Sayrami continued his education at the Saqsaq *madrasa* in Kucha, one of the most prominent educational facilities in Yettishahr at the time. At the Saqsaq, he received a complete classical training in religion, history, literature, calendar drafting, astronomy, grammar, mathematics, agricultural science, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and other subjects. By reading the classics of the Turko-Islamic milieu, Sayrami also indirectly acquainted himself with Greek and Roman authors. He returned to Sayram in 1854 and became a senior teacher at the Sayram *madrasa*. After an uprising broke out in Kucha in 1864 and rebel forces advanced westward in the direction of Aksu and Kashgar, Molla Musa became commander of a rebel troop composed of his students, peasants, and craftsmen. He later became a senior official in the Üchturpan area and also served in Yaqup Beg’s administration. After the Qing reconquest (1878), Sayrami travelled widely for several years throughout Yettishahr in order to collect sources for a history of the preceding events. In 1879, he returned to Aksu and began writing. He lived in poverty and after falling ill in March 1917, his relatives transported him on a donkey cart back to his home-

8 The biographical information on Molla Musa Sayrami presented in this book is largely the result of research by Xinjiang Kyrgyz historian Enwer Baytur, the editor of the modern Uyghur version of the *Tarikhi Hemidi* (Sayrami 1988).

town of Sayram where he passed away in April 1917. A domed tomb with blue tiles and a mosque, which were built at the site of his burial three months after his death, were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution in 1967 (Sayrami 1988, 3–11, 587–600; Ömer 1988, 1321–28; Ekhmidi 1996, 279–83).

Sayrami authored a number of poetic and prosaic writings,⁹ but it is his historiography of the Xinjiang Muslim rebellion that is relevant for this study. His works are methodologically unique primarily because he combined thorough textual research with extensive fieldwork and empirical research. He also often included large pieces of oral history and folklore into his texts. As he had taken an active part in the rebellion of 1864 and then served for over ten years as an official in the Yaqup Beg administration, he was also able to imbue the *Tarikhi Eminiye* and the *Tarikhi Hemidi* with the unique perspective of a direct actor in the events. He also made use of extensive interviews with many other participants and witnesses. As a result, the two histories are a uniquely valuable source hardly matched by any other contemporary text. Sayrami has thus gained a reputation as “one of the best historians that Central Asia has ever produced” (Kim 2004, xvi), while the *Tarikhi Hemidi* itself has been called a “cornerstone of modern Uyghur historiography” (Tursun 2008, 88). Another author pointed out that Molla Musa Sayrami wrote his historiographies in the heyday of a “Turkic language revival” (*Türkiy tilning qayta güllinishi*) during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which resulted from the decrease in prominence of Arabic and Persian as elite languages after the separation of Xinjiang from the rest of Central Asia, and that the Turkic renaissance was, in fact, a prelude to the subsequent Uyghur national awakening (Kamalov 2006, 23–24). Molla Musa Sayrami is indeed one of the founders of the modern Uyghur intellectual tradition.

Sayrami wrote the *Tarikhi Eminiye* (*History of Peace*) in 1903; the work was then published by the *Medrise-i Ulum* printing house in 1904 in Kazan, an important center of Turkic Muslim cultural life in Russia. As it was to be Sayrami’s only printed work, *Tarikhi Eminiye* became widely distributed in Yettishahr. Its title referred to the fact that at the time when Sayrami started writing the book, which was approximately twenty-five years after the Qing reconquest of Xinjiang in 1878, “enmity, hatred, and turmoil ended, and peace

9 His other literary works include *Qeside-i Sidiq* (1903), *Diwan Mesnewi* (*Compendium of Masnawi*; 1907), *Ghezeliyat* (*Ghazels*), and *Ferhad we Shirin* (*Ferhad and Shirin*); his historical works include *Tadhkirat-ul Ewliya fi Muftah-ul Iman* (*Biographies of Holy Men*; 1885), *Tadhkira-i Eshabul Kehif* (*Biography of Eshabul Kehif*; 1898), *Salamname* (1916), and *Tadhkira-i Khoja Afaq* (*Biography of Apaq Khoja*). Several other anonymous texts are attributed to him (Sayrami 1998, 3–11; Ömer 1988, 1321–28; Ekhmidi 1996, 279–83).

and tranquility [*emniyetlik*] prevailed” in the region [*ölke*] of Moghulistan (Sayrami 1904, 6; Sayrami 2000, 6). Sayrami subsequently revised and extended the *Tarikhi Eminiye* and published the new work under the title *Tarikhi Hemidi*, or *Hamid's History*. It was finished in 1908 and circulated in manuscript form. In the preface to the text, Sayrami specifically stated that the purpose of writing *Tarikhi Hemidi* was to record the events of war and the subsequent insurgent administration so that they would not be forgotten. He also mentioned that history is an invaluable discipline of science and that the very act of recording the events of a holy war against infidels engenders God's appreciation and causes ordinary people to remember the occurrences of the time. In choosing the title of the *Tarikhi Hemidi*, Sayrami alluded to the *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī* of Mirza Muhammad Haydar (1499–1551), historian of the Yarkend-based Seyyidid dynasty (1514–1680; for its English rendering, see Elias and Ross 1895). Haydar wrote the extensive chronicle between 1541 and 1546 and named it in commemoration of Abdulreshid Khan (1533–70), the second ruler of the Seyyidid dynasty (1514–1680), who was then in power. In this manner, Molla Musa Sayrami dedicated his *Tarikhi Hemidi* to the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909), whom he calls “the Supporter and Sustainer of Muslims in our epoch” (Sayrami 1988, 39).¹⁰ Finally, Sayrami's choice of title for *Tarikhi Hemidi* also stressed the need for ordinary people to be aware of the high political affairs of their time (Sayrami 1988, 33–40).¹¹

Both the *Tarikhi Eminiye* and *Tarikhi Hemidi* are substantial texts. The two are structurally similar, but *Tarikhi Hemidi* contains a larger amount of information based on more thorough research, and it is more often referred to in this study. In both works, Sayrami starts his narrative in the very distant past, recounting the mythical origins of the world and mankind, the legendary origins of Turkic tribes, and other nonhistorical events. He then turns to a historical description of past events that took place in and around Yettishahr (which he also sometimes terms Mongolia [*Moghulistan*]), the rise of the Chinggis Khan and rule of his descendants, their conversion to Islam, the establishment of the Dughlat tribe as the ruling elite in Moghulistan, the Seyyidid dynasty, the

10 For more on pan-Islamism, see Chapter 2 of this book.

11 Unlike Kim Hodong, who referred to the original versions of both works, this chapter refers only to their modern Uyghur editions. Enwer Baytur's modern Uyghur edition of *Tarikhi Hemidi* is based on a manuscript written allegedly by Sayrami himself in 1911 (Sayrami 1988, 1), while the modern Uyghur edition *Tarikhi Eminiye* is based on its Kazan printed version (Sayrami 2000, 2; Sayrami 1904). The individual keywords and expressions pointed to in this chapter are identical to the original versions. I am deeply grateful to Kim Hodong and Qurban Niyaz for their dedicated assistance with this section.

rule of the Makhdumzade khojas and the Junghars before the Qing conquest, and the Qing administration down to 1864. The core chapters, structured into two epics or narratives (*dastan*), describe the events of the Muslim uprising, the invasion of Yaqup Beg, his rule, and finally, the Qing reconquest. Both works also contain a conclusion (*khatime*), which includes a brief description of each of the seven cities, typical characteristics of their inhabitants, and important local places of worship, particularly pilgrimage sites.

It has been pointed out that a new kind of historical consciousness among Xinjiang Turkic authors awakened in the wake of the Muslim rebellion (Kim 2004, xiv).¹² Therefore, Sayrami's views as they were expressed in these two works might have been substantially different, or perhaps even substantially "modernized," compared to when the actual events took place. But at the same time, Sayrami's historiographies are among the last pieces of traditional imperial order scholarship to have been produced in Xinjiang and give a charming insight into the worldview of Xinjiang's inhabitants on the eve of modernity. In any case, this study uses the approximate time of Molla Musa Sayrami's authorship (c. 1900) as a starting point for examining the Xinjiang Turkic Muslim intelligentsia's expressions of communal identity and interest, rather than the Muslim rebellion, which was a turbulent and decisive turning point in political history of Xinjiang.

Protonational Community Boundaries

The following section of this chapter details the previously mentioned arguments by Kim Hodong and Laura Newby by taking a closer look into the two historiographies by Molla Musa Sayrami. For an introductory example of the elite intellectuals' perception of communal identity and interest of Yettishahr Muslims on the eve of the modern era, it is useful to refer to the following passage of *Tarikhi Hemidi*:

The city of Kucha revolted. Khoja Ishaq Khan Khojam was enthroned and had the sword of Islam publicly applied to the infidels' (*kapir*) throats. The pleasing news and grand celebrations of these events spread to all

12 This historical consciousness resulted in a comparatively large number of sources on this period, which include *Jang-namā* (*Book of War*) by Umīdī, *Ghuljaning Waq'atlarining Bāyāni* (*Story of Ghulja Events*) by Qāsim Beg, *Ghazāt al-Muslimūn* (*Holy War of the Muslims*) by Muhammad Sālih Yārkendī, *Ghazāt dar Mulk-i Chīn* (*Holy War in China*) by Mullā Bilāl, *Zafar-nāma* (*Book of Victory*) by Mullā Shaqīr, and *Tārikh-i nāma-i Ya'qūb Khān* (*History of Yaqub Khan*) by Mahmud Shaykh Gharīb (Sayrami 1988, 4; Kim 2004, 263–66).

directions throughout Yettishahr to those with power (*wali*) and to commoners (*ahale*). As a result, Muslims (*Musulman*) and Tungans (*Tungani*) in every city united for the purpose and delight of drinking the nectar of Islam and applying the sword to the necks of cruel infidels (*zalim kapir*). After Kucha, the Tungans and Taranchis (*Taranchi*) of Yettishahr in Ili became rid of subjection to the infidels and made the scholar (*elem*) Shewket Akhun their leader and sovereign. He was a very virtuous and pious man. Then, even the people (*ehl*) of Khotan slipped from the hands of the Chinese (*Khitay*). The people (*khelq*) of Yarkend and Kashgar also severed the thread of submission and servitude. Because Kucha stands like a gate to the other six cities, thus, when the soldiers from the interior (*Bijin*) came and were not able to raid Kucha, they were also not able to proceed anywhere else. People (*adem*) in Yettishahr were aware of this and revolted in one city after another. Everywhere, they chose a military commander and another person to whom they submitted, thus establishing state authority (*mülki tawayif*) (Sayrami 1988, 247).

This excerpt reveals that religion was perhaps the most prominent identity marker of the residents of Yettishahr at the end of the Qing dynasty. The most frequently used name, which resounds throughout the whole text of *Tarikhi Hemidi*, is *Musulman*, meaning “Muslim,” or “follower of Islam.” This loanword from Arabic denotes identity based on the religion its bearer follows. Indeed, Islam and its related cultural and social practices were factors that very sharply differentiated the *Musulman* from “infidels” (*kapir*; Sayrami 1988, 262) or “polytheists” (*mushrik*; 263), which are terms also frequently used in *Tarikhi Hemidi*. The religious impurity of infidels is sometimes emphasized by further attribution of the phrase “an infidel without religion” (*dinsiz kapir*; 185) or “an infidel without moral principles” (*nizamsiz kapir*; 632), as well as by other terminology, such as “a person in moral disorder” (*biseremjan*; *ibid.*). As the events related by Sayrami in both *Tarikhi Emiñiye* and *Tarikhi Hemidi* illustrate, Islam was the strongest element that at least temporarily unified the numerous rebelling and campaigning factions under the khojas’ leadership during the Kucha uprising. This was partly because, unlike the conservative and corrupt clergy (Ar. *‘ulama*) and begs, the khojas were the only indigenous elite group who retained credibility in the eyes of common Yettishahr Muslims. In fact, due to their noble descent from the Makhdumzade ruling class and Moghul aristocracy, they possessed “a tremendous religious charisma” (Kim 2004, 14). The prominence of religion as a guiding principle of *Musulman* society is further evinced by the religious overtones of *Tarikhi Hemidi*. Sayrami specifically stated that one of the reasons he wrote the account was his desire to fulfill a divine moral

imperative. Throughout the text, Sayrami also frequently expresses his devotion to God and principles of religious piety, acknowledges God's guidance of worldly occurrences, hopes for God's counsel and assistance in writing, and in numerous other ways demonstrates that he is a proper Muslim.

Sayrami commonly referred to the insurgency by the term "holy war" (*ghazat*; 1988, 185). In a pattern common in the revered "Golden Age" of Islam during the rule of the four initial rulers of the Muslim realm (Hourani 2005, 22) and after overthrowing the Qing administration, the Kuchean khojas also adopted honorary titles that declared a unity of political and religious power, such as "Honorable Holy Warrior Rashidin King Priest" (*Seyyid Ghazi Rashidin Khan Khojam*; Sayrami 1988, 197; Figure 1.2 [Coin of Rashidin Khan] or "Cleric-Ruler" (*Khojam Padishah*; 233). As ascertained by Kim, Rashidin Khan, who was the leader of the uprising, was a descendant of the respected Central Asian Sufi clan; similarly, the leaders of revolts in the other cities were mostly people of high religious status (2004, 61–66). Institution of local rebel regimes was often followed by vigorous promotion of Islamic practice, such as the implementation of Islamic law (Ar. *shari'a*), compulsory public prayer, and construction of mosques (Sayrami 1988, 208, 230). In the same way, after Yaqup Beg invaded Yettishahr, defeated the khojas, and declared a single Islamic realm, he appealed for support to the Ottoman Sultan Abdülaziz (ruled 1861–76), who indeed did proclaim him the "Commander of the Faithful" (Ar. *Amiral-Muminin*), a title previously reserved for the ruler of all Muslims (Ar. *Caliph*; Kim 2004, 153). In turn, Yaqup Beg minted coins with Abdülaziz's name inscribed on them (Zhu 1991, 71–72, 202–203). Both the Kuchean and Yaqup Beg's regimes had strong religious inclinations and resembled the Makhdumzade theocracy from before the Qing conquest. At the same time, Yaqup Beg's diplomatic efforts also reveal that he was very well aware of contemporary international politics and the changing nature of the imperial world order. Thus, Yaqup Beg's negotiations with Great Britain represented an effort to address the difficult position of his state between imperial China and Czarist Russia (Kim 2004, 138–58).

The term "infidel" as used by Sayrami in *Tarikhi Hemidi* is often synonymous with the term *Khitay*, meaning "Han Chinese."¹³ Their homeland was

13 According to Baytur, the name *Khitay* comes from the ethnonym *Kitan*, an ethnic group who constituted the main element of the Liao dynasty (遼, 907–1125). After its devastation by the Mongols, the Kitans migrated west and founded the Kara-Khitay dynasty (in Chinese sources 西遼 Western Liao, 1124–1218) in Central Asia. During their reign over China (1271–1378), the Mongols used the term *Khitay* to denote northern China and the northern Han population (the corresponding Chinese term being 漢人 *Hànrén*), whereas



FIGURE 1.2 *Coin of Rashidin Khan*

Cast from copper during the Rashidin Khan insurgency in Kucha, 1864–67. Private collection. Obverse inscription: Seyyid Ghazi Rashidin Khan ('Honorable Holy Warrior Rashidin King'). Reverse inscription: Zarb dar as-Sultanat Kucha ('Struck in the Kucha Sultanate').

designated as *Bijin* (originating from the word “*Beijing*” 北京), a term that in Sayrami’s work denoted either the capital or the interior provinces of the Qing Empire. Sayrami notices that the Han in Yettishahr were soldiers, administrative officials, and merchants (1988, 262). The Han residing entirely in Xinjiang at the time consisted of four main subgroups. First were members of the Qing garrison, namely Green Standard troops (綠營 *Lǜyíng*; Millward 1998, 33), numbering approximately twelve thousand in the mid-eighteenth century (Kim 2004, 16); however, how much of this force was composed of the Han and how many were Chinese-speaking Muslims (ancestors of today’s Hui 回 nationality) is unknown. The other three subgroups were administrative officials (including the higher officials who were almost invariably Manchus and Mongols), merchants (who had established themselves in the region prior to the Qing conquest and whose numbers swelled dramatically between 1759 and 1864, which made the Han, along with the Khoqandis, the most influential business circle in Xinjiang at the expense of indigenous Musulman businessmen; Millward 1998, 113–68), and settlers residing in civilian agricultural colonies. Thus, in addition to being an object of a holy war waged by Muslims against infidels, the Han personified the oppressive and invasive Qing domination in Xinjiang as a result of their privileged status. These two factors often made the Han victims of brutal attacks during the insurgency, which, after its initial outburst in Kucha, erupted almost simultaneously all over Yettishahr. *Tarikhi Hemidi* contains numerous descriptions of horrid atrocities committed by revolting Muslims.

Notably, Sayrami did not employ the name *Manchu* in his descriptions of the insurgency. This might be due to a Manchu occupational and linguistic

southern China and the southern Han population were classified as *Chín* (南人 *Nánrén*; Sayrami 1988, 722–23).

identity that was already weakening by the early eighteenth century (Elliott 2001, 278–94). In fact, the Manchus constituted 76.6% of 619 high officials serving in Xinjiang before 1884, and there were approximately twelve thousand Manchu bannermen deployed in Xinjiang in the mid-eighteenth century (Kim 2004, 16). Similarly, Sayrami disregarded several other groups living in northern Xinjiang, such as the Shiwe and the Daghur, who were moved to Xinjiang from today's Manchuria in order to protect the border and quell uprisings. Thus, the term *Khitay* as used by Sayrami could have actually included several disparate ethnic elements, all of which may have been perceived by the indigenous Musulman as a homogenous group of infidel intruders.

Sayrami further distinguished two other indigenous non-Musulman ethnic communities that fall under the category of infidel. The first were the *Qalmaq* (Sayrami 1988, 200). These were the Torghut Mongols who migrated in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries from today's eastern Jungharia westward to escape Khalkha and Junghar expansion. They settled north of the Caspian Sea, where they came to be called *Qalmaq*, or Kalmyks. However, in 1771, about seventy thousand Kalmyks came back to the Qing, seeking refuge from Russian taxation. They were permitted to resettle in Jungharia and the eastern part of the Southern Circuit of Xinjiang (Millward 2001, 91–92). The second group recognized by Sayrami were the *Solon* (1988, 199), a Manchu tribal formation resettled from the Heilongjiang region. Finally, Sayrami also noticed the infidel foreign nationals of Caucasian origin, namely the *Urus* ("Russians"; 324), and the *Fereng* (from the word *Franc*, loaned by Arabic in the sense of a "Westerner"; *ibid.*).

Importantly for this research, the term "Musulman" conveyed several other patterns of self-identification by the Xinjiang population besides religious affiliation. These covert connotations become clear if the term "Musulman" is juxtaposed to other communal names used by Sayrami. For example, it is obvious that for Sayrami the term "Musulman" means *Turkic* Muslim. There were numerous other Islamic communities living in the region, all identified by Sayrami in distinct terms. The most prominent of these were the *Tungani*, Chinese-speaking Muslims or Tungans who were ancestors of today's Hui. Like the Han, the Hui were already present in the region when the Qing annexed Yettishahr (Millward 1998, 113). In Qing sources, they were generally not considered a separate ethnic category but were included as part of the Han population, therefore, their exact number in Xinjiang at that time is not certain. As mentioned above, the Hui formed a portion of the 12,000-strong Green Standard troops stationed in Xinjiang after the conquest and lived in agricultural colonies in the Eastern Circuit and Jungharia. They also formed sizable military and merchant communities in Urumchi and Yarkend (Kim 2004,

41–46). Apart from residing in agricultural colonies, Tungans also made a living through activities related to supplying the Qing garrison. The Qing conquest of Xinjiang, in fact, availed Tungans of the opportunity to escape strained living conditions in Gansu (Lipman 1997, 94–95).

Besides Turkic Muslims, the Tungans were the second most powerful element in the Xinjiang Muslim insurgency. It even appears that it was the Tungans who started the rebellion in each of the Seven Cities except Khotan (Kim 2004, 37–57). The Musulman and Tungans were capable of forming a military alliance, as they did during the outbreak of the khoja rebellion in Kucha (Sayrami 1988, 182–83) or the joint attack of both groups on Urumchi (277). However, generally the relationship between the Musulman and the Tungans ranged from distrust to open animosity, as when the Tungans controlled Yarkend (219). Occasionally, even the Tungans' adherence to Islam was disputed by the Musulman, who perceived the Tungans as infidels equal to the Han and indiscriminately massacred both groups, as during the revolt in Khotan (380).

Apart from the Tungans, Sayrami identified other Islamic communities in Xinjiang. The above excerpt takes note of the *Taranchi*,¹⁴ the descendants of Turkic Muslims, or in other words, Musulman families from Yettishahr resettled in Jungharia by the Junghars in the beginning of seventeenth century (Kim 2004, 52) and then in larger numbers shortly after the Qing conquest (Millward 1998, 50). The purpose of their resettlement from Yettishahr to Jungharia was to engage them in farming and soil cultivation, since the northern Xinjiang's economy was largely of a pastoral nature and agricultural skills were in high demand. Another factor that stimulated the Taranchi resettlement was the North's depopulation following the Qing decimation of the Junghars. Other Islamic communities residing in Yettishahr that were recognized by Sayrami include the *Hindi* (Muslims from India), the *Keshmiri* (Kashmiris), the *Afghani*, and the *Bedekhshi* (Badakhshanis; 1988, 641). Sayrami was further aware of the existence of the *Ereb* (Arabs; 43), the *Ejem* (Persians; *ibid.*), and the *Tajik* (188). The contrastive use of the term "Musulman" in opposition to Tungan and other Muslim groups thus underlined the Turkic origin of the inhabitants of Yettishahr. Furthermore, the term "Musulman" obviously denoted a settled and agriculturalist population in Xinjiang, for some other Turkic Islamic groups native to the region, such as the nomadic and pastoralist *Qyrghyz* (Kyrgyz; 211)

14 One theory traces the origin of the name *Taranchi* to the Chaghatay word *taranchi*, meaning "farmer" (Saguchi Tōru cited by Millward 1998, 271). It is a popular conviction among Uyghur public today that the term comes from the Uyghur word *térimchi*, meaning "harvester."

or *Qazaq* (Kazak; 264) are specifically excluded from the Musulman by Sayrami.

Finally, the term “Musulman” pointed specifically to the indigenous population of Yettishahr. This fact is implicit from Sayrami’s use of the term in opposition to other Turkic settled Muslim communities that were active in the insurgency. In particular, Yaqup Beg relied predominantly on his own Muslim troops brought from Khoqand into Yettishahr. The Khoqandis were, as perceived by Sayrami, composed of two main elements: in addition to the nomadic *Qipchaq* (Sayrami 1988, 215), it was the Turkic settled population of Khoqand that was a community very similar to the Musulman of Yettishahr in terms of religion, culture, history, and other characteristics.¹⁵ However, the Musulman of Yettishahr viewed the newcomers as a distinct and alien group and called them *Enjanliq* (Andijani; 224). This sharp distinction was exacerbated by the Musulmans’ indignation at the Andijanis’ higher social and material privileges, which existed prior to the rebellion as a result of the Qing commerce and tax privileges, as well as over the Andijanis’ high civil and military posts and wide abuse thereof under Yaqup Beg (Kim 2004, 106–7). Yaqup Beg himself was perceived as an Andijani and not as a Musulman, and his entrée to Yettishahr was referred to as an “occupation” or “raid” (*istila*; Sayrami 1988, 31).

Dynamics of Accord

In the above-discussed Barthian sense, Sayrami’s use of the term “Musulman” functioned as a mechanism delineating sharp communal boundaries. When posited contrastively to labels denoting other communities of Qing Xinjiang, the name pointed specifically to settled Turkic Muslims indigenous to Yettishahr. In other words, apart from religious identity, the collective name “Musulman” also distinguished its bearer according to descent, mode of life, and place of residence. Besides the existence of such a distinct communal name, there also existed other forces which centripetally drove the Musulman in the direction of feeling or acting as a unified protonational community. In examination of such stimuli, which may be tentatively termed *dynamics of*

15 Settled Muslims of both Russian and Chinese Turkestan used the autonym “Sart,” which in Xinjiang survived at least into the 1930s (Teichman 1988, 16). In Xinjiang, it designated a Turkic population, while in Russian Central Asia it also pointed to non-Turkic (i.e., Persian-speaking) urbanites. The term Sart is today still occasionally used in Xinjiang. Sometimes the term carries slightly derogatory connotations, such as in the saying “There is poison in the last bite of the Sart’s meal,” used by local, originally pastoral, nationalities (i.e., Kazaks and Kyrgyz) to mock the Uyghur custom of yielding the last piece of a common meal to show respect to other people at a table.

accord, it is useful to supplement the Barthian focus on boundary with a closer examination of the cultural substance enclosed within the Musulman communal boundary.

One example of the dynamics in Musulman communal identity patterns is Sayrami's use of the toponym *Yette Sheher* (or *Yettishahr*) meaning "Seven Cities" or "Heptapolis." Ildikó Bellér-Hann remarked that while the analogous term *Altishahr* ("Six Cities") itself is very suitable because it conveys the reality of both difference and similarity among the individual cities, it moreover tends to emphasize "if not exactly territorial unity, [then] at least features that these settlements had in common" (2008, 39–40). Administrative unification, rotation of officials, population movement, and other Qing measures that sought to manage the Tarim Basin cities as a single polity drew on similar homogenization phenomena of the past, such as the process of Turkicization of the area since the ninth century, Islamization since the tenth century, or Junghar administration since the seventeenth century. But it was the Qing who after 1759 capitalized on historical precedents and managed to bind the *poleis* of Yettishahr into a tightly knit administrative unit and merge it with Jungharia and eastern Xinjiang. But even though the local power in Yettishahr rested in the hands of begs who were appointed for each city separately and enjoyed a high degree of local autonomy in their action, Sayrami's histories imply that the author understood the situation in Yettishahr as a single paradigm. Sayrami's inclusion of events taking place in the Turfan-Komul-Barköl and the Ili regions moreover reveals that he understood the overall political and social situation in what used to be Moghulistan (i.e., Qing Xinjiang) as one phenomenon.

Sayrami's description of the unfolding of the insurgency also attests to the existence of notions of the common plight of the Musulman of Yettishahr. After the more or less simultaneous outbreak of revolts in Yettishahr and in Ili, the local rebels established largely autonomous rebel regimes in each city. However, the Kuchean khojas almost immediately campaigned against the other cities in order to bring them under a unified Kuchean administration. Similarly, the Musulman often fiercely resisted Yaqub Beg's invasion because they perceived it as an occupation by an alien force. And after Yaqub Beg conquered southern and eastern Xinjiang, he also managed them as a single polity under a centralized administration system and military command.

Sayrami's note of the dynamics of accord within the Musulman community is also implied in his descriptions of the individual cities, given in the concluding sections of the *Tarikhi Eminiye* and *Tarikhi Hemidi*. Sayrami specifically listed Kashgar, Yarkend, Khotan, Aksu, Üchturpan, Kucha, and Turfan as the Seven Cities and describes the typical traits of the people living in each. One can, for example, learn that Kashgar could not be surpassed in terms of

the skillfulness of its local craftsmen, knowledge of its scholars, and trading abilities of its merchants—for this reason, Kashgar was nicknamed “second Bukhara” (Sayrami 1988, 639). The people of Yarkend were known to respect travelers but rarely traveled themselves (641). Similarly, people of Khotan were very thrifty (642), people of Kucha had reasonable intellectual and manual capabilities but were not too happy about outsiders coming to the city (659), and people of Turfan were honest, sincere, and knew no treachery (660). Sayrami’s inclusion of Turfan among the Seven Cities is particularly interesting because it implies a sense of common identity among the populations of both the Tarim and Turfan Basin.¹⁶ Notably, Sayrami interpreted the special characteristics of people from respective cities as local dissimilarities within an otherwise homogeneous community. Another important attribute of the common cultural identity of inhabitants of Yettishahr is the description of sacred tombs and burial sites (*mazar*) of Sufi saints, masters, and patrons located in each city. These shrines constituted important identity sites and were visited and venerated by the Musulman of the whole region (Sayrami 1988, 668; Bellér-Hann 2008, 349–50). In some cases, several pilgrimages to such local sites would even be equivalent to one pilgrimage to Mecca, which is one of the pillars of Islamic practice. The *mazar* worship was a strong marker of Uyghur identity, which retained its substantial significance until today (Dawut 2007). Notably, Sayrami did not mention any local differences in the culture, language, or customs of the Musulman in their respective oases and describes Yettishahr as a homogenous cultural realm with a common heritage, symbology, religion, language, political tradition, culture, and other identity markers.

Sayrami’s narrative of the early history of the Yettishahr region and its residents also tends to highlight the dynamic of accord. He sees Yettishahr as a region that has been culturally and religiously compact since the complete Islamization of Uyghuristan by Khizir Khoja, son of Tughluq Temür (1988, 119). Sayrami anachronistically referred to the region as Yettishahr when narrating the region’s ancient myths and legends. Another term used by Sayrami throughout the text is *Moghulistan* (i.e., Mongolia), which is portrayed as a unitary realm ruled by the *Moghuls* (i.e., Mongols), descendants of Chinggis Khan (67–97, 636–37). In fact, Sayrami used the term “Moghulistan” more or less as a synonym for Xinjiang. When recounting the myths of the creation of man and the Turkic peoples, Sayrami traced the genetic origins of all the inhabitants of Yettishahr to Moghul, who was a fifth-generation descendant of Türk, who

16 It has been argued that Turfan had been added to the original Six Cities, and the term Altishahr was replaced by Yettishahr only after Yaqub Beg conquest (Masami Hamada cited in Rudelson 1997, 31).

was a son of Yapheth, who was a son of Prophet Noah, who was a son of Adam, the first human (41–46, 52–53). The conversion of Turkic peoples to Islam is claimed to have occurred during the life of Oghuz, grandson of Moghul (53–54). In other words, Sayrami viewed the inhabitants of the Yettishahr region as genetically related by having the same ancestry. And although Sayrami regarded the Taranchis as a group living in a location different from that of the Musulman, his awareness of the Taranchis' recent resettlement from Yettishahr and of their close genetic, religious, historical, and cultural ties to the Yettishahr Musulman reveals that he considered the two groups a more or less contiguous community.

Dynamics of Discord

The above examples trace Molla Musa Sayrami's articulation of the centripetal dynamics of accord, which propelled the Turkic settled Muslims native to Yettishahr to cogitate and act as a protonational community. The following section examines an antagonistic centrifugal force, which may analogously be referred to as *dynamics of discord*—those that led the Yettishahr Musulman not to act as a single community, despite the fact that they were clearly aware of their common identity. Again, the first passage of *Tarikhi Hemidi* translated above is indicative. Besides employing terms that reveal quite an advanced degree of distinction among Musulman, Tungan, and Taranchi identities based on shared religion, descent, mode of life, language, and other markers, the excerpt contains other labels which identify the region's population. One type distinguishes their bearers according to social status. This pattern of identification is represented by several words meaning “people” or “populace”—*ahale*, *ehl*, *khelq*, and *adem*. Other synonymous terms frequently appearing in *Tarikhi Hemidi* are *puqra* (Sayrami 1988, 182) and *khalayiq* (266). Apart from their general meaning of “people,” these terms often imply a “common people” or even “poor people,” as shown by the usage of the term *ahale* in the above-quoted excerpt. Another term for common people at the time was *albankash*, which means “the payer of *alban*,” or the “head-tax.” The head-tax payers could be further divided into landowning peasants, tenants on government lands, and tenants of private landowners (Fletcher 1978a, 73).

Sayrami's use of terms denoting “people” or “common people” is contrasted with terminology denoting Qing administrators, such as the term “tyrant” (*zalim*) used in the excerpt. Another synonymous term used in *Tarikhi Hemidi* is “oppressor” (*zulumkhor*; Sayrami 1988, 185). Combined traits of cruelty and religious infidelity are also quite frequent when characterizing the Qing officials, such as the expression “polytheist tyrants” (*mushrik zalim*; 255). However, Sayrami declares on several occasions that it was the corruption and tyranny of

the Qing administration that was a significant underlying reason of the khojas' rebellion (182, 632). Besides these emotional expressions, *Tarikhi Hemidi* also contains numerous neutral references to the Qing administration apparatus, represented in the above excerpt by the word *wali* meaning "governor," here used rather in the general sense of "high official."

Nevertheless, it is the references to division and antagonism *within* the ethnic category of Musulman that are more significant for this research. The language and content of Sayrami's histories reveals that there existed several kinds of discord among the Musulman in Yettishahr. One was fragmentation according to territory and place of residence. Although Sayrami portrayed Yettishahr as a single territorial, cultural, and political entity, it is evident that local oasis identities (Rudelson 1997) continued to play an important role, similar to pre-Qing times. Obviously, the previously described physical layout of Yettishahr—a string of more or less isolated and distant *poleis* around the Taklamakan Desert or several self-sufficient oases in eastern Xinjiang and the steppe-covered Junggar Basin separated from each other by demanding mountain ranges—continued to shape political events at a time of inefficient central or provincial administration. Late Qing times were not the last occasion when this trying geographical layout impeded the emergence of a unified political organization.

The persistence of local identities in Yettishahr is also easily traceable from the unfolding of the Muslim rebellion. Immediately after the rebels overthrew and massacred the Qing garrison and the Han population of Kucha, the newly enthroned ruler Rashidin Khan Khoja sent troops to subjugate other parts of Yettishahr that rose in revolt shortly after Kucha. But the local rebel leaders in the other oases put up a fierce resistance against the intended unification under the new regime. For example, the Kuchean army campaigned against Khotanese forces but was defeated and fled. The rebel ruler of Khotan Hebibula Khan reprimanded the Kuchean regime for slaughtering good-hearted officials of the Chinese emperor and subsequently allying with malevolent elements and Tungans. In fact, Hebibula Khan himself had previously even sought military assistance against Kucha from Khoqand; in exchange, he would prefer submission to Khoqandi rule to recognition of Kuchean authority (Sayrami 1988, 380–81). Later, when Yaqup Beg's invasion of Yettishahr was imminent, some Musulman factions collaborated with the Khoqandis while other factions resisted (305–10). Local factionalism and disunity within the Kuchean regime itself was the main cause of the defeat of the khoja rebellion and subsequent control of the whole territory by Yaqup Beg (Kim 2004, 58–59).

Similarly, even though Sayrami did not specifically mention so, it can be assumed that there also existed several inner subboundaries within the Musulman category. A good description of internal disparate communities included in the Musulman community can be found in Sayrami's account of the expedition by Russian scientist Nikolay Mikhaylovich Przhevalskiy (1839–88) from Kyakhta to the springs of the Yellow River in 1885. En route, Przhevalskiy traversed the territory of the newly founded Xinjiang province and took note of ethnic self-perception in the local population. He specifically recorded the following:

[I]n the entire eastern Turkestan, there is not a universal type of inhabitant. Various nationalities, which have migrated into the region, have intermingled here. . . . Along with the isolated location of the oases of eastern Turkestan, their mutual rivalry and grudge have obstructed the unification of the inhabitants, which until today are only called by the towns and oases where they live, without the denomination of common nationality. (Prževalskij 1951, 304)

In the except, Przhevalskiy refers to the common means of identifying a person by employing the name of the oasis where a person resides and attaching to it the suffix *-lik* (in possible phonetic variations *-liq*, *-luq*, and *-lük*, meaning “coming from” or “living in” a certain place), producing forms such as *Qeshqerlik* (a Kashgari) or *Khotenlik* (a Khotani). Interestingly, Sayrami does not use this method of identification in his works, neither does he use the terms “Turk,” “Turki,” “eastern Turkestan,” or “eastern Turk,” in his *Tarikhi Hemidi*. Przhevalskiy's account further identifies the *Loplik* living near Lop Nor; the *Machin* living in the area between Cherchen and Khotan or in Yarkend; the *Ardbul* living in Kashgar and Aksu; the *Khorasan* living in Bay, Kucha, and Korla; the *Qul* living in Chire and Yarkend; and the *Dolan* living in the Maralbéshi and Merkit areas. It was the Machin who considered themselves indigenous to the region (Prževalskij 1951, 242–57, 303–4, 368, 385). These and most probably also other ethnocultural groups living in Yettishahr were included by Sayrami under the grouping Musulman without specific mention.

Sayrami's texts further suggest that there also existed other patterns showing disunity among inhabitants of the same oasis. Again, the conclusion to *Tarikhi Hemidi* can be taken as an example. One of the principal issues Sayrami examined in his description of the mentality of a particular city's people was their sense of unity. For example, he tells us that the people of Khotan are united in

words, actions, and goals, whereas the people from Aksu or Üchturpan have no concept of partnership or community (1988, 642, 649, 656). Eventually, as the following passage illustrates, this factionalism and disunity again contributed to the failure of the Muslim rebellion and ensuing reconquest of the Southern Circuit by Qing troops:

Mirab Ehmet Beg was appointed the governor of Khotan, and *yüzباشي* Tokhti Niyaz was appointed governor of Yarkend. Because when the beg was returning after he had conquered Khotan, he wanted to fight the imperial soldiers. So he ordered his secretary to take hay, fodder, flour, and rice to Maralbéshi. Tokhti Niyaz was put in charge and sent with the provisions. When he came to Maralbéshi and waited, suddenly a Qing commander arrived there. *Yüzباشи* Tokhti Niyaz took the provisions, donated them to the soldiers of the Great Emperor, and declared: "When I heard that many soldiers of the Great Emperor came from far away to call on such worthless people as us, and that they arrived in Aksu, I took the grain, which I had myself planted, along with some of my own animals and went ahead to welcome the soldiers of the Great Emperor." The commander was very happy, praised the good heart of Tokhti Niyaz, and, because of this merit, appointed him the governor of Yarkend. (Sayrami 1988, 607–8)

Other passages in Sayrami's histories also indicate that the disunity among the Musulman native to a single city was a result of social stratification and a sharp divide between common people and indigenous ruling elites. As described earlier, the lower levels of power in the Southern Circuit were entrusted to begs, who were appointed by and received substantial benefits from the Qing administration. The begs' substantial autonomy in ruling practices resulted in corruption, namely various kinds of illegal taxes and surcharges imposed on the common taxpayers. In the eyes of ordinary Muslims, begs became an integral part of the Qing administrative system and, as such, were despised in much the same way, regardless of their Musulman identity and religious creed. As suggested by Laura Newby, begs and other local Musulman functionaries were caught between the "two worlds" of the religious mandate of Islam and the political mandate of the Qing (Newby 1998). In places, Sayrami literally stated that the oppression by begs was as valid a reason for rebellion as the oppression by the Qing imperial administrators. Strong ties between the Qing administration and local begs are also attested to in an episode during the outbreak of the Kucha revolt, when the rebelling crowd murdered Ahmad Wang Beg, a former beg who refused to become the leader of the uprising on the grounds of loyalty to the Qing (182–84).

The divide between common people and the ruling stratum was not surmounted even after the Kuchean regime took power. Sayrami expressed an unfavorable evaluation of the khojas, stating that they were different neither from begs nor from Qing officials in terms of mismanagement, corruption, and extortion. He even claimed that during the thirty-seven months of their rule, the khojas amassed an enormous amount of wealth but did not use it for the welfare of the people. Additionally, they were not competent in statecraft and administration:

They neither found relief for themselves, nor created peace for the common people. During the time they were in charge of the realm, difficulties and inconveniences arose for the common people. Therefore, after the khojas were gone, no one missed them nor wished for their return, and no one thought in good terms of them. All the families, clans, and people of the land were dissatisfied with them. (Sayrami 1988, 324–25)

Sayrami's appraisal of the Kuchean khojas' rule, which is interestingly very similar to his criticism of the pre-Qing khoja theocracy (Sayrami 2000, 25–26), corresponds to his concern over effective and humane government, often voiced in his histories, "Great God, teacher and protector of the whole world! May you give asylum to people of each place and city from evil kings' fury and oppressors' tyranny" (72). Such statements underline one of Sayrami's motivations for writing his histories—to record events so that future generations are aware of the common people's lot and better able to establish efficient and humane government. In another words, Sayrami was not concerned with political events from the perspective of a Musulman holy warrior, but from the point of view of an enlightened intellectual who saw an equation mark between the well-being of mankind and the virtues of good government, regardless of its religious creed or genetic origin. In places it seems as if after having himself witnessed the insurgency, Sayrami put down the sword of political activism and picked up the historian's pen to wage a struggle against social injustice. Besides the above-mentioned perception of Yettishahr inhabitants' communities in protonational contours, it is Sayrami's perspective on the common people's interest that attests to his unique position as one of the founders of the modern Uyghur intellectual tradition. His devotion is again well exemplified in one of the final passages of the *Tarikhi Hemidi's* Second Epic:

To sum up, the poor and weak who could no longer withstand the bitter oppression of immoral and deluded infidels, sought comfort and hope from God, the Lord of Life, till their eyes were full of tears. God heard their prayers and lamentations and bestowed the Kuchean khojas upon

the tyrants. The people rejoiced as if they had been salvaged from the tortures of hell and as if they had entered paradise and the world of eternal delight. Cries of joy rose all the way up past the blue dome of Heaven. But the khojas soon opened the doors to tyranny, forgetting about their previous nature. The people burst into anger and turned to God again. The mighty God gracefully and kindly fulfilled their prayers and imposed Muhammad Yaqup Beg upon the khojas. The people prayed and chanted in gratitude for being saved from despair under the rule and taxation of the Kuchean khojas and celebrated merrily. But eventually Ataliq Ghazi Bedölet's character changed, and he began to commit improper deeds. The patience of the people was depleted once again, and they became fed up with the taxation by the state. Shedding tears, they turned to God the Creator and as they demanded and called for the Emperor of China, their cries went past Heaven. In the end, with the consent of God, Lord of Life, the officials of the Emperor of China stepped into Yettishahr. They brought this land under their domination and appended it for the second time to the realm and heritage bequeathed by their great ancestors. All the people, even former officials, cheered like blooming buds as if their own relatives and parents were resurrected back to life. . . . But in this moment of history, again the imperial officials surrendered their conscience and discarded their policy of righteousness and, in a wink of an eye, increased their despotism. Once again, the eyes of the poor and miserable filled with tears. Oh God, may your supreme might grant a sense of justice to the kings and gracefully show the right path to common people! (Sayrami 1988, 632–35)

1.3 Chapter Summary

Molla Musa Sayrami's texts reveal several patterns of how an endogenous intellectual at the turn of twentieth century perceived his community as a cohesive entity distinct from other communities, or in words of Laura Newby, that "there existed a sense of community among the people whom we now refer to as Uyghurs that was discrete and did not extend to other peoples" (2007, 16). The dynamics of accord outlined above suggest that the author had quite a clear perception of the premodern, protonational community of Musulman (i.e., the settled Turkic Muslims indigenous to Yettishahr who later evolved into the Uyghur nation) in late imperial Xinjiang. These dynamics defined the Musulman by a number of common features and patterns, namely communal boundary (distinct from other communities), religion (Islam), mode

of life (settled), association with a specific territory (Yettishahr and northern Xinjiang), ethnic origin (Turkic), myth of descent (Oghuz-Moghul-Türk-Yapheth-Noah), shared history (the Moghul legacy), distinctive shared culture (no major differences among respective oasis-based identities), and a feeling and imagery of common identity (a sense among their elites of common aspects of the Musulman identity). Further, the initial stage of the insurgency could perhaps be termed the Musulman communal mobilization: the Muslims of Yettishahr rebelled jointly because they were subject to imperial heteronomy and oppression by the indigenous ruling elite (begs). In this sense, group solidarity transformed into unified action in order to defend communal interest, which bridged social, regional, and factional fissures within the Musulman community. The immigrant Han and Hui merchants and settlers, as well as the autochthonous Turkic Muslims—three major groups distinguished by religion, language, culture, and similar markers—were in socioeconomic competition over resources, namely market and land. The tensions and mobilization during the Xinjiang rebellion thus crystallized along linguistic, religious, residential, and occupational divisions and triggered a large-scale and coordinated movement of communities, which was to recur as a movement of nations, nationalities, and ethnic groups in coming decades. In short, the premodern and protonational Musulman sense of communal identity, and their ability to occasionally act as a single whole in defense of communal interest in the late Qing era, formed a basis for the future modern Uyghur national identity and nationalist movement.

It was already mentioned in the Introduction that this study draws on texts written by Xinjiang Turkic intelligentsia and politicians, and thus, outlines elite perceptions of identity and interest. Due to Sayrami's high social status and educational background, one can only speculate about the degree of social penetration that his elite notions concerning the Musulman identity had on the common people of Yettishahr during this time. On the other hand, given that Sayrami was a superb historian, he most probably only recorded prevalent and relevant beliefs of the time, not marginal or insignificant patterns. It remains to be determined by further research to what degree Sayrami's works were inspired by or directly drew upon other contemporary sources. Nonetheless, Sayrami's self-declared intention to fulfill a moral obligation imposed by God and write his works as a historical record of events and a lesson for future generations, along with his eventual detachment from political life and focus on an academic career, signal that his histories were probably not penned as works of agitation or propaganda by an activist intent on inventing an illusion of Musulman communal identity. Sayrami's texts likely reveal Musulman notions of identity and interest that were presumably not limited

only to elite circles of the Xinjiang settled Turkic Muslim society at the dawn of modernity during the late Qing dynasty.

At the same time, Sayrami's histories suggest that potent dynamics of discord fragmented the Musulman community into several subgroups delineated by intra-Musulman boundaries. Local and social factionalism (or the combination of both) were the main factor that prevented settled Xinjiang Turkic Muslims from reaching their common Musulman interests. At first, Kuchean khojas and other local insurgent regimes in Yettishahr did succeed in overthrowing the Qing administration under the banner of Islam. But after all Musulman jointly supported this particular communal interest, they did not manage to take the next step, which would have been to establish an effective Musulman state and administration uniting all local and social elements throughout Yettishahr. Although Islam was initially one of the unifying creeds for the numerous factions, it eventually turned out to be an issue of secondary importance. In other words, religion became a prominent mobilizing force only after the oppressive Qing heteronomy had become unbearable, but quickly lost its unifying potential once the Qing administration and the Han population were annihilated. It then became clear that the primary cause of the rebellion was not a religious divide. Religion thus functioned as a sort of reserve argument in the mass mobilization process. Eventually, the khojas and Yaqub Beg's administration became as unpopular as the infidel Qing system against which the insurgency was originally aimed. In Sayrami's texts, the oppressive Musulman administrators were occasionally labeled during the insurgency in precisely the same terms as the previous Qing officials.

The fall of Yaqub Beg's realm was marked by the surrender and defection of Musulman rebels to returning Qing troops. The ethnicity and religious affiliation of the Qing authority, which had overtly been an important cause in the rebellion, suddenly ceased to matter to ordinary Musulman, who often welcomed the restoration of the Qing imperial order as a more efficient alternative to khojas and Yaqub Beg's oppressive regime. Eventually, the abandonment by the respective Musulman subgroups of a common interest during the insurgency replaced the dynamics of solidarity and comradeship generated by a shared Musulman identity. Thus, although the Musulman of Yettishahr did manifest a sense of communal identity in the initial stages of the revolt, they ultimately did not regard the Musulman communal interest as more important than the fragmented communal interests of various local and social factions. In this sense, the Musulman did not ultimately act as a unified and solidary community in a way that could be regarded as a predecessor of a national or nationalist movement. Similar to other communities elsewhere, they displayed multiple situational communal identities in different contexts. The following

chapters of this book argue that the seemingly paradoxical pattern, in which the Musulman did not in some situations act as a single community even though they shared many common characteristics and to a certain degree also a sense of common identity—in other words, the simultaneous existence of the dynamics of accord and the dynamics of discord—is a relevant theme throughout the entire early modern history of the Uyghurs. The following chapter explores the forces that ushered the Musulman from the old religious and imperial world order into the modern age, namely those forces that strengthened the dynamics of accord within the Musulman people and simultaneously transformed them into dynamics of a nascent modern Uyghur national identity and national movement.

Emergence of the National Idea and National Agitation (1910s–1920s)

The following chapter inspects the emergence of the modernist and national discourse of Turkic intellectuals in late Qing and early Republican Xinjiang. The fact that the national rhetoric was directly inspired by modernization and nation-formation processes that occurred at the turn of the twentieth century in several other contexts (namely inner China, the Ottoman Empire, and Russo-Soviet Central Asia) again underlines the age-old pivotal function of the modern Xinjiang territory as that of a crossroads of ideologies. By examining the flow of external modernist stimuli into Xinjiang and their coalescence with its local context, this research primarily observes projects in education, publishing, and social organizations. The examination of writings of Nezerghoja Abdusémetov, Abdukhalik Uyghur, and Memtili Tewpiq illustrates the emergence of the national idea, and specifically, the Uyghur national idea, both abroad and in its transfer into the Musulman community. This chapter elaborates on what has been called the “intellectual interpretation” of national movement and nationalism, which views these phenomena as a search for cultural identity and a product mostly of intellectuals who are building on a common linguistic, cultural, and political heritage and who are actively designing educational systems in order to inculcate nationalist values into their youth. It will be illustrated later in the text that the Xinjiang Turkic progressive intelligentsia’s literacy, education, awareness of modern developments, and other skills acquired in the first wave of new Xinjiang Turkic schools later enabled these figures to become outspoken communal political leaders.

2.1 The Late Qing (1878–1912) and Early Republican (1912–33) Administrations

Simultaneous with the collapse of Yaqup Beg’s regime after the mid-1870s in Xinjiang, a debate over the profitability of the Xinjiang reconquest resounded in Qing military circles. The side in favor of giving up the vast, barren, and restive region, which moreover required regular central subsidy, was represented by Li Hongzhang (李鴻章, 1823–1901), the Governor-General of the Zhili (直隸) province and one of the leading promoters of the maritime

defense of China. The opposing side represented by Zuo Zongtang (左宗棠, 1812–85), another leading figure of the modernization of the Qing army who gained merit by suppressing Taiping (太平), Nian (捻), and Tungan rebellions in the 1860s and 1870s, argued for the reconquest of Xinjiang in order to use the territory as a buffer against the territorial expansion of Great Britain and Russia in the direction of the capital (Millward 2007, 125–27). Ultimately, the reconquest faction won the dispute. Following several years of preparations, Zuo Zongtang's forces under the field command of Liu Jintang (劉錦棠, 1844–94) took advantage of the decomposition of Yaqup Beg's regime and any indigenous Muslim defense and reconquered Xinjiang by January 1878. Under the provisions of the Treaty of St. Petersburg (1881), the Qing also recovered the eastern part of the Ili valley, which had been annexed by Russia in 1870. Subsequently, Xinjiang's administrative status was changed from military protectorate to regular civil province in 1884 (建省 *jiànshěng*). The new province was divided into prefectures and counties (郡縣 *jūnxiàn*) staffed exclusively by Han magistrates selected through a state examination system. The highest ranking official was the newly established Governor (巡撫 *xúnfǔ*) based in Urumchi, although he formally answered to the Governor-General of Shaanxi and Gansu (陝甘總督 *Shǎn-Gān zǒngdū*), provinces based in Lanzhou (蘭州; Millward 2007, 124–48).¹

Provincialization of Xinjiang brought about substantial changes. Apart from saving funds previously needed to maintain a sizeable military garrison, the new system also terminated the principle of indirect rule through begs and wangs. In order to repopulate the region and expand its taxation base, provincial government further facilitated the Han immigration by means of resettlement stimulation packages. New administrative divisions generated the need to establish institutes of Confucian learning throughout the province, which was, in turn, expected to enable cultural change in the indigenous population (化風 *huàfēng*). With these measures, Xinjiang was eventually to become culturally and demographically homogenous with China proper and, hence,

1 Similar to the reconquest of Xinjiang, its provincialization was a measure which had been debated previously within imperial policy-drafting circles. In an 1820 essay, Qing reformist scholar Gong Zizhen (龔自珍, 1792–1841) first stressed the eventual financial benefits of an initial investment into infrastructure, the resettlement of the populace from China proper, the abolition of military rule, and the introduction of the provincial system. Wei Yuan (魏源, 1794–1856), another influential Qing literatus, was also an advocate of the administrative unification of Xinjiang with China proper by means of Han resettlement and the reclamation of land in the Southern Circuit (Millward 1998, 241–44, Newby 2005, 112–17). Zuo Zongtang himself was convinced of the need to provincialize Xinjiang long before the reconquest (Millward 2007, 132).

easier to rule. Provincialization aimed at a tighter incorporation of Xinjiang into the Chinese politicocultural realm, mainly through sinification of the administrative system and acculturation of the indigenous population (Millward 2005, 265–66). It has been pointed out that this fundamental shift in the Xinjiang administration policy was parallel to the extension of the inner China system of rule over other frontier regions, which was instituted, for instance, during the establishment of Taiwan as a province in 1887 (臺灣) and Fengtian (奉天), Jilin (吉林), and Heilongjiang as provinces in 1907 (黑龍江). Even though the Qing dynasty did not manage to solve the problem of Xinjiang's dependence on a central budget, to acculturate the local population, or to meet other objectives, provincialization was nevertheless a moment of great significance for Xinjiang and is considered one of the markers of the beginning of its early modern era (1884–1949; Millward 2007, 148–58).

The uprising in Wuchang (武昌) in 1911 and subsequent proclamation of the ROC (中華民國 *Zhōnghuá mínguó*) quickly influenced events in distant Xinjiang. Revolts broke in 1911 and 1912 in Urumchi and Ghulja. In the provincial capital, the movement was swiftly suppressed by the last Qing governor, Yuan Dahua (袁大化, 1851–1935). The rebellion in Ghulja was more successful. Discontent and revolt had been stirred there mainly by two forces. One was the Ghulja branch of the Revolutionary Alliance (同盟會 *Tóngméng huì*), an all-China secret society aiming to overthrow Manchu rule and establish the republic. The other was the Elder Brothers' Society (哥老會 *Gēlǎo huì*), an underground anti-Qing brotherhood that was founded during uprisings in 1851–74 in the middle and lower Yangzi region and that infiltrated Xinjiang with the arrival of Zuo Zongtang's troops. In the course of the Ghulja rebellion, officers of the modernized provincial New Army forces, who were often simultaneously members of the two subversive organizations, managed to mobilize their ranks, a certain part of civil officials, local Han and Tungan settlers, and even some Turkic Muslims and succeeded in establishing a revolutionary administration. Meanwhile in Urumchi, Yuan Dahua transferred his authority to his subordinate official, Yang Zengxin (楊增新, 1859–1928). Yang immediately declared allegiance to the ROC and was confirmed as Civil Governor (都督 *dūdū*) and Military (督軍 *dūjūn*) Governor of Xinjiang by President Yuan Shikai (袁世凱, 1859–1916) in May 1912.

During his rule over Xinjiang, Yang Zengxin proved to be a superb strategist, capable of eliminating a great number of various security threats and challenges to his power. He brought the Ili region back under provincial jurisdiction by awarding the uprising's leaders with government posts. Soon after, he charged them with treason and had them executed. He coopted into the provincial power structure and subsequently annihilated the bosses of the Elder

Brothers' Society, which challenged his power in southern Xinjiang, and with the leaders of Muslim Turkic uprisings against wangs of Komul and Turfan, which broke out several times around the Qing-Republic transition. He also successfully avoided a full-scale military conflict with Outer Mongolian troops, who raided the northeastern border of Xinjiang. By 1918, he managed to disarm and repatriate around three hundred thousand Kazak refugees streaming into the province in the wake of Russian misrule and also some thirty to forty thousand White Russian troops running away to Xinjiang from the repercussions of the October Revolution, as well as to suppress the Turkic Muslim uprising in Kucha and the mutiny of provincial troops in Altay. It is remarkable that Yang scored these victories largely through means of negotiation or plot and that he was able to maintain control of Xinjiang for over sixteen years with a mere ten thousand troops (Forbes 1986, 11–12, 17; Millward 2007, 167–70; Huang 2003, 6).²

Yang was equally ingenious in maintaining his power. He terminated a working relationship with Beijing and established the practice of merely notifying the central Beiyang government (北洋政府 *Běiyáng zhèngfǔ*; 1912–28) about his actions. At the same time, he deployed a sizeable garrison along the eastern border of Xinjiang to limit and control traffic with China proper and Inner Mongolia. These measures led to the loss of the central government's control over Xinjiang, practically speaking. Yang also relied on a variety of imperial administration mechanisms. On the lowest administrative level, he preserved the authority of begs. In Turfan, Komul, and Lükchün, he kept local wangs in position to rule over their fiefdoms. Finally, he also left intact the customary authority of clergy and landowners. In exchange, indigenous power elites supported Yang's rule and were instrumental in enforcing his policies (Ezizi 1997a, 124; Burhan 158). This tactic was combined with a range of totalitarian and violent practices, such as assassinating opponents, creating an efficient intelligence and censorship system, appointing functionaries exclusively on the basis of strong personal ties, and restricting travel within, in, and out of the province. In managing ethnic affairs, Yang employed the traditional strategy of "controlling barbarians by other barbarians" (以夷制夷 *yǐ Yí zhì Yí*, also 以夷治夷 *yǐ Yí zhì Yí*)³ and created interest clashes between nomadic Mongols

2 An increase in military personnel as well as any investment into combat technology and infrastructure were absent as elementary traits of warlordism and militarism (Van de Ven 1997, 353, 360) in Yang Zengxin's governance of Xinjiang. It is perhaps more apt to regard him as a relic of imperial statecraft in semimodern times, instead of a militarist, similar to other personages of the early Republican era.

3 This strategy had been previously used in Xinjiang by Han Wudi (武帝; ruled 141–87 BC), for instance, who sent General Zhang Qian (張騫) on a diplomatic mission to the Yuezhi

and Kazaks as well as between settled Musulman and the Huis (Forbes 1986, 15; Burhan 1986, 171). Yang's economic policy, on the one hand, succeeded in dealing with the termination of subsidy from the central budget after the fall of the Qing. On the other hand, it also meant harsh exploitation of provincial resources, developing only those aspects of the indigenous economy and infrastructure that were instrumental in the maintenance of his power and widespread corruption (Forbes 1986, 14–15, 28–32; Lattimore 1950, 56–60).

Yang's cultural policy was conceived in accordance with a traditional Taoist and Legist conviction that ignorant and uneducated people are easier to rule than a cultured and knowledgeable population. He relied on blockading political and cultural influences, such as education, the press, and other attributes of modernity, from surrounding regions. As will be illustrated further, Yang's isolation policy did not succeed all the way. The period of his rule is, nonetheless, notorious for a general lack in the government's cultural policy and in its contribution to the cultural progress of Xinjiang's indigenous population. There existed virtually no provincial press, bookshops, theaters, or other cultural institutions. Bringing any printed material into Xinjiang and discussing political matters in public was illegal. Indigenous clerisy and landowning circles gladly cooperated with Yang on this project. Thus, Yang Zengxin's thoroughly autocratic government and elaborate efforts at preserving an overall status-quo had a twofold effect. For one, during the initial period of the Republican era (1912–28), Xinjiang remained politically and economically stable and thus was spared the chaos and inflation of the civil war raging in China proper. Secondly, Yang's politics of isolation resulted in a detrimental stagnancy in all walks of life. Contemporary sources relate that conditions in Yang's Xinjiang showed only minor differences from a society of the premodern era (Ezizi 1997a, 129, 131; Burhan 1986, 182–83, 214; Abdusémetov 1991, 70, 94–96).

Jin Shuren (金樹仁, 1879–1941), who was victorious in the power struggle after Yang Zengxin's assassination in 1928,⁴ sought to follow the course set by

in 139–125 BC that aimed at forging a Han-Yuezhi military alliance against the Xiongnu. Not knowing that the Yuezhi had since migrated, Zhang Qian ventured through present-day Xinjiang, Ferghana, Sogdiana, and Bactria until he found the Yuezhi by the Oxus (Amu) River. Although he failed to enlist the Yuezhi's support (and later also that of the Wusun), he brought to the Han court an enormous amount of intelligence on western regions that had been mostly unknown until that time. It was also owing to Zhang Qian's mission that the Han were able to exert control over portions of today's Xinjiang and temporarily establish the Western Regions protectorate (西域都護府 *Xīyù dūhùfǔ*), lasting from 60 BC until the first decade AD.

4 The coup to overthrow Yang's rule was designed by his subordinate, a reform-minded official named Fan Yaonan (樊耀南, 1879–1928). The actual murder took place during a banquet in

Yang. He continued to declare Xinjiang's adherence to the ROC while maintaining *de facto* independence on the Nationalist government's (國民政府 *Guómín zhèngfǔ*, 1928–49) jurisdiction.⁵ Use of autocratic and draconian ruling practices, depletion of local resources for personal benefit, and maintenance of economic and cultural isolation remained the fundamentals of governmental practice under Jin (Forbes 1986, 38–42, Millward 2007, 189–91). However, it soon became clear that Jin lagged behind his predecessor in talents and skills. Economic and social conditions deteriorated rapidly, and Jin's rule was challenged by mutinies and rebellions, which started erupting as soon as in 1929. Furthermore, he alienated indigenous Turkic Muslims by a series of acculturating measures, such as terminating the power alliance with local elites and appointing Han officials to junior administrative posts previously staffed by begs and wangs. Turkic Muslim discontent eventually erupted in the form of the Komul uprising in 1931 and quickly threw the whole province into turmoil and bloodshed. Jin Shuren was unable to deal with the situation and was overthrown in a coup in 1933.

Apart from provincialization, another distinguishing characteristic of the onset of the modern era in Xinjiang was an increase in influences from the territory of Russia (later Soviet Union). One area where the trend was clearly visible was the economy. Russian commercial involvement in Xinjiang had begun already in the 1830s and grew steadily as Russia was able to negotiate instruments to propel her interests. By the end of the Qing rule in Xinjiang in 1912, Russia enjoyed such privileges as duty-free commerce in cities where consulates were located (Kashgar, Urumchi, Ghulja, Chöchek,⁶ and Sharasume), the extraterritorial judicial status of her subjects, or the right to station security personnel to protect her business interests. Easy marketing of Russian products (mainly sealskins and furs, velvet, gold and silver embroidery thread, house and agriculture tools, smelted copper and steel, loafsugar, and others) was possible due to the geographical and logistical proximity of Russian

Urumchi on July 7, 1928 (or on the seventh day of the seventh month of the seventeenth year AR; hence, the name of the event in Chinese—Triple Seven Coup, 三七政變 *Sānqī zhèng-biàn*). There exist several eye-witness accounts of the assassination (for example, Wu 1940, 45–52). Fan's scheme misfired, and Yang loyalist Jin Shuren had him arrested and executed the next day.

5 The Nationalist government introduced new terminology for official posts: Jin was appointed provincial Chairman (主席 *zhǔxí*) and Commander-in-Chief (總司令 *zǒng sīlǐng*). Yang Zengxin had pledged his allegiance to the new central authority shortly before his assassination.

6 Sometimes also called Tarbaghatay.

Central Asia to Xinjiang in comparison with inner China.⁷ By the end of Yang Zengxin's administration, Soviet trade constituted 23% of provincial income, and by the end of Jin's era, the Soviet Union became the only trading partner of Xinjiang (Fletcher 1978b, 325–32; Huang 2003, 5). The actual protagonists of the Russian and Soviet trade were often Tatars and Uzbeks, who, due to their close cultural ties with Xinjiang Musulman, formed a bridge over which modern trends were transferred into the province.

2.2 Origins of Turkic Modernity and Nation-Formation Processes

Before outlining the impact of cultural and political stimuli from Russia and the Soviet Union on the emergence of Uyghur concepts of nation and nationalism, it is useful to mention two other factors that were also important in the process. In China proper, anti-Manchuism, republicanism, and nationalism were the most significant intellectual movements of the late nineteenth century. These trends gained prominence as the Manchu-dominated dynasty rule proved to be incompetent in ruling China as well as in defending it from foreign incursion and economic subjugation. Anti-Manchuism (排滿 *pái Mǎn*) had its origins in the thought and works of intellectuals of the Ming-Qing transition, such as Gu Yanwu (顧炎武, 1613–82) or Wang Fuzhi (王夫之, 1619–92), who resented Manchu rule, arguing that alien ethnic groups can never become fully acculturated and thus are unfit to rule culturally superior China. Late Qing proponents of anti-Manchuism, such as Zhang Binglin (章炳麟, 1868–1936) or Zou Rong (鄒容, 1885–1905), argued for the annihilation or expulsion of Manchus from China (Dikötter 1994, 97–119; Rhoads 2000, 11–18). However, excluding Manchus and denouncing the Qing imperial heritage would mean that the new Chinese state would be expected to relinquish vast border regions previously conquered by the Qing. Therefore, the leading activists who demanded overthrowing the dynasty by means of revolution soon realized the problematic aspect of anti-Manchuism and dropped the radical creed from their rhetoric. Shortly after the emergence of the ROC on January 1, 1912, came an appeal for the preservation of the racial and territorial unity of the Qing polity (Leibold 2004, 167–83; Leibold 2007, 38–39).

7 The logistical proximity of Russo-Soviet Central Asia was mainly due to the construction of railways through western Central Asian territory between 1879 and 1931. As a result, in the 1920s the journey from Kashgar to Beijing took around five months, whereas to Osh, Andijan, or Khoqand was under ten days (Rudelson 1997, 42).

Nationalism was likely the most formative ideology throughout the whole period of Republican China (1912–49). As mentioned in the Introduction, the term “nation” (民族 *mínzú*) was incorporated into the Chinese revolutionary discourse at the turn of the twentieth century. Early Chinese nationalists were, on the one hand, inspired by the modernization and reforms in Japan during the Meiji era (明治; 1868–1912), which adopted nationalism and the concept of “nation” (in Japanese 民族 *minzoku*) from European thinkers and politicians. On the other hand, Chinese nationalists also encountered the term directly in Chinese translations of English and American works. Leading revolutionary Sun Yat-sen (also known as Sun Zhongshan, 孫中山; 1866–1925), sometimes called the “Father of the Republic” (國父 *Guófǔ*), is also regarded as one of the theorists of Chinese nationalism (民族主義 *mínzú zhǔyì*; literally “doctrine of people’s lineage”). Albeit not systematized, seemingly contradictory, and often purely utilitarian, Sun’s nationalism became one of his “Three People’s Principles” (三民主義 *sānmín zhǔyì*; the other two being “doctrine of people’s authority,” 民權主義 *mínquán zhǔyì* and “doctrine of people’s livelihood,” 民生主義 *mínshēng zhǔyì*), which were the ideological foundations of Republican administration. According to Sun’s theory, the Chinese republic consisted of five distinct and legally equal ethnocultural communities (i.e., Han, Manchu, Mongol, Muslim, and Tibetan), which in turn formed the political “Chinese nation” (中華民族 *Zhōnghuá mínzú*) delimited by the boundaries of the Qing Empire and thus, ideally, also of the ROC. It was understood that the Han were to make up the core nationality. This principle of “five-nationality republicanism” (五族共和 *wǔzú gònghé*) was a leading ethnic theory of the very early Chinese republic in the 1910s and early 1920s. The Three People’s Principles later became the official state ideology of the ROC after Chiang Kai-shek’s (蔣介石, 1887–1975) nominal unification of China (the Northern Expedition, 北伐 *Běifá*, 1926–28) and the subsequent decade of the Chinese Nationalist Party’s (中國國民黨 *Zhōngguó guómín dǎng*; KMT) administration (Leibold 2004, 183–203; Rhoads 2000, 274–75; Dikötter 1994, 123–31).⁸ Apart from the KMT’s ideology, nationalism was also a potent ideological element in the influential May Fourth Movement (五四運動 *Wǔsì yùndòng*, 1919), which emerged as a negative reaction of Chinese students and intellectuals against the Treaty of Versailles’ transferring the former German concession in Shandong (山東) to Japanese jurisdiction. The May Fourth Movement later had a strong impact on the formation of modern Chinese thinking, culture, and politics. At the same time, nationalism was initially one of the basic tenets of the CPC (中國共產黨 *Zhōngguó gòngchǎn dǎng*), founded in 1921

8 The KMT’s interpretation of nationalism is examined in greater detail in Chapter 4.

in Shanghai. And nationalism stemming from China also naturally provided strong stimuli for the formation of a modern Uyghur national identity and sense of nationalism in Xinjiang.

Intellectual currents flowing into Xinjiang from a Western direction also proved to be a powerful driving force for Xinjiang Turkic Muslim intellectual developments. Previous scholarship has pointed to the correlation between modernization and the emergence of national identity in the Ottoman Empire. This phenomenon took place within the wave of reformist efforts that had been surging in the Islamic world since the latter part of the nineteenth century as a reaction of the Muslim elites to the advance and strength of European nations over the Islamic community (Ar. *'umma*). In Arab regions of the Ottoman Empire, reformist trends were sanctioned by the state to a certain extent. Mainly in Cairo and Tunis, schools with curricula modeled on European examples that trained officials, officers, doctors, and engineers for government service were being established. At the same time, modern schools were also started by indigenous bodies and foreign missions, particularly in Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt. Arab newspapers and periodicals introduced Western culture, science, and technology to their growing readership, as did the translations of Western literature, manuals, and textbooks. New literary genres were created according to Western models (such as drama, the short story, or the novel), and new vocabulary entered into the Arabic language. The combined effect was the emergence of a new, progressive intelligentsia, who were strongly aware of their ethnocultural identity and eventually became capable of an articulate expression of their political demands for increased national autonomy. Even in the new social context of the modern era, Islam remained a defining trait of modern culture. Arab intellectuals drew upon the thought of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–97) and Muhammad 'Abduh (1849–1905), who believed that Islam was fully compatible with the bases of modern civilization, such as reason, progress, and social solidarity. The closely related doctrine of pan-Islamism, which stressed the importance of overall Muslim unity in political and economic aspects, became one of the leading lines of imperial foreign policy vis-à-vis Muslim realms under sultan Abdülhamid II (ruled 1876–1909; for greater detail, see Hourani 2005, 302–28; Zürcher 1994, 81; Kim 2004, 150; Landau 1995, 46–48).

In the core Turkic parts of the Ottoman Empire, modernization is located by several scholars under the reign of sultan Mahmut II (ruled 1808–39). One of the motivations of his policies was to centralize power relying on the support of a strong and modern army. To achieve these objectives, Mahmut II instituted a wide range of policies in administration, finance, the legal system, communication, education, and diplomacy. The reforms continued through the so-called

Tanzimat ("reorganization") era (1839–76) and, to a certain extent, also during the reign of Abdülhamid II. Reformist ideals were also embraced later on by intelligentsia and elites who opposed the sultanate and advocated a patriotic, constitutional, and parliamentary system. These elites were perhaps best known as the Young Ottomans (*Yeni Osmanlılar*, since 1865) or the Ottoman Unity Society (*İttihad-i Osmani Cemiyeti*, since 1889), which was later renamed the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*; CUP). This organization, also known as the Young Turks (*Yeni Türkler*), was a radical and nationalist political association that had a dominant influence on Ottoman, and later also Turkish, politics long into the twentieth century (Zürcher 1994, 39–70, 86; Landau 1995, 45–56).

Even though the Young Turks were initially exponents of *ottomanism* (*Osmanlılık* or *Osmanlıcılık*), or the ideal of equality among all religious communities (*millet*) within the Ottoman empire and their patriotic loyalty to it, later they became ardent advocates of the modern Turkish nation, defined most importantly by a common language (Hourani 2005, 309). Turkish nationalism was even projected into a series of reforms by the CUP politicians in the 1910s. The ideology was closely related to the concept of pan-Turkism, an initiative toward the cultural and political union of all peoples of proven or alleged Turkic origin, living within or outside the Ottoman Empire, or subsequently, Turkey (Landau 1995, 1).⁹ Prominent theoreticians of pan-Turkism were Yusuf Akçura (1876–1935), Ziya Gökalp (pseudonym of Mehmed Ziya, 1876–1924), and Tekin Alp (pseudonym of Moise Cohen, 1883–1961; Zürcher 1994, 123, 127–32; Landau 1995, 29–45). However, both the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, the only sovereign Turkic territory in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, failed to transform the idea of pan-Turkism into political action aimed at a physical unification of Turkic territories. But although the ideology of pan-Turkism remained a largely cultural phenomenon with only marginal influence on political affairs of the time, it did carry a strong appeal for some intellectual strata of Muslim Turkic communities in other parts of Islamic cultural space, such as Xinjiang.

9 Another related term is pan-Turanism, or Turanism, which seeks to unify all the peoples originating from Turan, a mythical land lying among China proper, Tibet, India, Iran, the desert of Dasht-i Kipchak, and the Caspian Sea. Turanism even strived to appeal to non-Muslim nationalities, such as the Hungarians, Finns, and Estonians. Concepts of pan-Turkism and pan-Turanism were formulated by Hungarian orientalist Arminius Vámbéry in his work, *Sketches of Central Asia* (1868; Landau 1995, 2).

Turkic Nation-Formation Movements in Russia and the Soviet Union

The most decisive influence for Uyghur national identity and discourse formation in the late nineteenth century was the modernism of Turkic Muslim communities inhabiting the territory of Czarist Russia. Its first protagonists were Tatars of the Volga region and Crimea, whose activities, in fact, slightly predated those of Ottoman modernists. The khanates of Kazan and Crimea had been subjected for a long time to Russian rule (since 1552 and 1783, respectively) and thus were strongly influenced by Russian developments. One of the effects was a considerable level of Tatar cultural development and literacy when compared with other Muslim communities throughout the Islamic world. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Russian Tatars encountered the doctrine of pan-Slavism, which was one of the fundamentals for Russian foreign policy and a model for pan-Turkism. Finally, Crimean Tatars especially profited from a close geographical proximity to the Ottoman Empire because it enabled them to follow Ottoman trends. Tatar intellectuals were the first to realize several important facts. In spite of common ethnic origins and a close linguistic relation among Turkic nations, attaining unity was impeded by the geographical incontinuity of the regions they inhabited. This reality resulted in deficiencies in communication between the Turkic regions. Moreover, individual Turkic languages and their written and spoken forms differed markedly. Finally, the overwhelming majority of the Turkic population was illiterate. The rare cases of literacy were reserved for men educated in traditional religious institutions. Thus, education and press were the two most important arenas of activity for the Russian Turkic Muslim modernists.

The lack of communication and insufficient education in Muslim communities were systematically addressed by Crimean Tatar Ismail Bey Gasprinskiy (or Gaspıralı; 1851–1914). In 1883, he started publishing a Turkic/Russian bilingual newspaper called the *Interpreter* (*Tercüman/Perevodchik*) with the motto “Unity in Language, Thought, and Action” (*Dilde, Fikirde, İşte Birlik*) in its masthead. Turkic contributions to the paper were written in a so-called common language (*lisan-i umumi*), an artificial language devised by Gasprinskiy to breach language differences within the Turkic milieu. The common language was based mainly on Crimean Tatar and Ottoman Turkish, but it was deprived of any Arabic and Persian vocabulary. The practice of publishing in a sort of Turkic *lingua franca* spread, and later other periodicals were issued using such a language, for example *Time* (*Waqit*) in Orenburg, *Voice* (*Sada*) in Baku, *Kazan Correspondent* (*Kazan Muhbiri*), and *Turk* (*Türk*) of Cairo. Apart from these, there existed yet a larger number of periodicals in local Turkic languages that circulated in all parts of the Turkic world, including Xinjiang, especially after the Russian 1905 revolution brought some liberal policies, such as an increase in

the freedoms of speech and press. Thus, the spread of printed matter improved communication within the Turkic milieu and was instrumental to the rise of the Turkic Muslim national consciousness (Landau 1995, 9–13).

Gasprinskiy also achieved significant breakthroughs in the realm of education. In 1884, he opened the first school to teach a modern curriculum modeled on the Western system. Instead of traditional Arabic, the language of instruction was native Turkic. The number of classes on Islam was reduced and supplemented by secular subjects, such as Turkic language and history, Russian, French, German, world history, geography, natural history, physics, chemistry, psychology, logic, and accounting. In the remaining religious courses, a modernized form of Islam that reflected current trends was taught. Gasprinskiy's language classes used a so-called new method (*usul-i jadid*), a phonetic way of teaching the Arabic alphabet (Khalid 1998, 89). This approach became known as Jadidism, signifying a modernist approach to education and to the whole social and cultural reform movement pioneered by Russian Turkic Muslims. Apart from new education, Tatar Jadids also advocated a general fostering of knowledge, the creation of new civic institutions, and an improvement in the position of women in Muslim society, as well as other progressive measures. These ideas and practices quickly spread to other Muslim territories in the Russian empire, where they simultaneously combined with local progressive trends and inspired an intense wave of modernism. Apart from areas with a strong Tatar (Kazan, Ufa, Orenburg, and others) and Azeri (Baku) presence, the Jadidist movement was the strongest in Central Asia, an area with a largely Turkic population that had been only recently incorporated into the Russian empire (1865–95). Prominent figures of Central Asian Jadidism include Behbudi (pseudonym of Mufti Mahmud Khoja, 1874–1919), Munawwar Qari (1878–1931), Abdurrauf Fitrat (1886–1938), and Fayzullah Khojaev (1896–1938). By 1905, the number of modern schools throughout Russian Muslim communities reached approximately five thousand (Allworth 1965, 61–70).

A well-researched analysis of Central Asian Jadidism (Khalid 1998) summarized the movement's traits and impact on the traditional Muslim society. The study underlined the fact that Jadidist intelligentsia were primarily concerned with the adaptation of Islam to modernity, the mobilization of their Muslim compatriots toward a national awakening, and the uplifting of their status within the Russian empire. For this purpose, they successfully employed current technical innovations, such as newly built roads and railways, a postal system, and the telegraph or press as vehicles for a more intensive spread of information and thought. As a result, new forms of social organization and cultural practice emerged, including publishing houses, philanthropic societies, and eventually, political parties. By far the most important concern of

the Jadids was a modern education system, a crucial means to Turkic self-improvement that taught both religious and secular knowledge in native Turkic vernaculars enriched by progressive neologisms. The main difference from the traditional education system was that in the new curriculum, and ideally also in the whole of the new society as envisioned by the Jadids, Islam constituted only one of several components of their identity. The natural result of this approach was a loss of the monopoly on social leadership by traditional clergy. An ideal alumnus of a Jadidist school was a practitioner of Islam, who was well educated and skilled in contemporary secular matters. Despite conflicts with conservative clergy, by 1917 the Jadids managed to establish themselves as a new social class of patriotic Muslim progressive enlighteners. The Jadids thus effected the cultivation of progressive elites, an emphasis on modern education, and an infatuation with print and publishing—a markedly urban tint on their antagonistic relationship with the power monopoly of traditional clerisy—all of which were very important stimuli for the formation of a modern nation and sense of nationalism.

Even though the Muslims of Central Asia generally defined their community in religious terms at the turn of the twentieth century, in some instances they already based their identity on Turkic fundamentals. The prominence of Turkic aspects of ethnic identity even briefly increased after 1917, due to relaxed Russian censorship on one side and the support of pan-Turkism by the Ottoman Empire on the other side (Khalid 1998, 291–92). A good example of the Jadids' embrace of Turkic identity is a statement made in 1917 by the Tashkent Islamic Council (Ar. *Tashkand Shura-yi Islamiya*), a committee of Muslim representatives:

Muslims! All hopes, all goals of us Turks are the same: to defend our religion and our nation, to gain autonomy over our land and our country, to live freely without oppressing others and without letting others oppress us. Turkestan belongs to the Turks. (Khalid 1998, 293)

Khalid points out that the Czarist and Soviet authorities mistook Jadidism for a sort of separatism but that such concern was rather exaggerated. There were two main reasons for this, namely because in the Czarist and Soviet power structure, there existed no mechanisms for the Muslims to effect independence and because the Jadids themselves failed to recruit the support of the Muslim conservative strata (Khalid 1998, 229). However, after the 1917 revolution, the Jadids did manage to broaden the scope of their activities to a certain degree from the cultural to the political arena. The fact that the Jadids were

sometimes involved in projects that strongly compromised Soviet authority¹⁰ and later played leading roles in the Central Asian Turkic society until the 1930s suggests that there was a close correlation between Jadidist ideology and an increased political participation followed by articulate demands for political autonomy.

Apart from the Jadidist movement, after 1917 it was also the ethnic policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) that contributed to the formation of the ethnic identities of Central Asian Muslims. The chief strategy during the first stage of the Soviet minority policy (1922–29) was a complex affirmative action in the form of so-called indigenization (*korenizatsiya*), or creating national attributes of the newly defined ethnic groups and republics of the Soviet Union. The newly introduced criteria of national delimitation were based predominantly on ethnicity and language and were to replace the previously existent religious, regional, and occupational identities of Central Asian Muslims.¹¹ In a process lasting until 1936, indigenization led to the abolition of the Czarist administrative division of Central Asia and to the gradual creation of Soviet republics that had borders delimited according to ethnic boundaries and the formal right to secede from the Soviet Union. Other measures intended to stimulate national identities of newly defined ethnic groups were a standardization or creation of national spoken and written languages, a compilation of national histories or epics, the founding of national Academies of Sciences, the opening of schools in native languages, and the training of native communist cadres. Naturally, the definition of national traits of Central Asian ethnic groups accelerated the growth of national consciousness among Central Asians and led to the rise of a new class of secular, often fervently communist, Central Asian intellectuals who were strongly aware of their ethnic identity (Connor 1984, 201, 213–14; Martin 2001, 1–2, 125–26; Wimbush 1985, 73; Bruchis 1984, 132). A representative example of the new Soviet secular elite was Mirza Sultan-Galiev (1892–1940), a prominent Tatar communist. However, an undesirable consequence of indigenization for the Soviet authorities was an increase in the articulation of political demands by new Muslim intelligentsia.

10 Separatist Central Asian statelets with Jadidist participation included, for example, the Khoqand autonomy existing in the Ferghana Valley in 1917–18 and Alash Orda with its capital in Semey in 1917–20.

11 Similar to Qing Xinjiang, and despite the importance of religious affiliation in communal identification, the existence of several ethnic categories in the Russian censuses of 1897 and 1911 (Matley 1967, 104) suggests that proto-national consciousness did exist to a certain degree prior to Jadidist efforts and Soviet indigenization.

Thus, the affirmative action experiment was terminated after Stalin (1878–1953) commenced his totalitarian campaigns in the mid-1930s and set a new course of Soviet ethnic politics. Sultan-Galiev and other Soviet Muslim figures, along with leading Jadids, were eliminated in Stalin's purges on charges of nationalist deviations in late 1937.¹²

Origins of Modernity in Xinjiang

The above described nation-forming processes in the Ottoman empire/Turkey and Czarist Russia/Soviet Union provided a model pattern, and occasionally also a directly participating actor, in the emergence of a modern Uyghur national identity and nationalism in Xinjiang. As mentioned before, modernist trends brought to Xinjiang from outside could build upon a period of Turkic language revival in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, following the Qing conquest when Turkic became the primary elite language of Xinjiang indigenous intelligentsia (Kamalov 2006, 23–24). Further steps in the national direction were taken by enlightened educators and publishers affiliated with merchant circles. Since the late nineteenth century, a certain portion of Xinjiang Musulman elites were able to increase their physical mobility. Some families ran extensive commercial networks in Czarist Russia and the Soviet Union, and even managed to expand their entrepreneurial activities into the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, and Germany. Other reasons for travelling abroad were education or religious pilgrimage to Mecca (Khushtar 2000a, 210–15; Janishif 2001, 39; Bellér-Hann 2008, 349). During these stays abroad, Xinjiang Turkic merchants observed foreign contemporary cultural and political trends and were stunned by the higher degree of development in comparison with Xinjiang. Upon returning to Xinjiang, they strived to introduce foreign practices into the local context. Thus, despite potent factors inhibiting cultural interaction between Xinjiang and the outside world (e.g., physical distance and Yang Zengxin's isolationist policy), it is during the period 1884–1933 that Xinjiang Turkic society first experienced instances of modern progressive trends. The presence of modern education, the press, and new social structures similar to those found in Islamic regions discussed above provided conditions for the emergence of progressive Xinjiang Turkic intelligentsia, who subsequently played a key role in the formation of a modern Uyghur national consciousness.

The most powerful impact on the emergence of a Uyghur national consciousness was generated by modern education. Before examining this phenomenon, it is useful to briefly refer to other types of educational

12 Soviet ethnic policy is further discussed in Chapter 3.

facilities available to Xinjiang Muslims at the time. The “compulsory school” (義塾 *yìshú*) was established by the provincial authorities as a gratis educational institution that taught Confucian ethics and statecraft and used the Chinese language as a medium of instruction. The Qing administration started founding these schools after the reconquest of Xinjiang in 1878 in order to acculturate local Muslim elite children and to train them as interpreters and clerks. The future job of these bilingual Turkic officials was to facilitate communication between the Qing Empire and its subjects. In addition to standard teaching materials used in schools in China proper, the schools used special bilingual Chinese-Turkic materials that were expected to bridge the language barrier between Turkic students and Han or Hui teachers. Turkic students were given Chinese names—such as Ài Xuéshū 愛學書, which means “Loves Learning”; Bì Dé míng 必得名, which means “Must Acquire a Reputation”; or Tuī Dà lùn 推大論, which means “Promotes the Great Theories”—were required to wear Chinese attire, and had to shave their heads or to braid their hair. These schools remained largely unpopular among the Turkic population (Millward 2005, 265–66; Millward 2007, 142–43; Schleussel 2009, 385).

In 1904, the Qing court implemented a policy of replacing traditional Confucian schools with newly founded modern schools, literally called halls of learning (學堂 *xué táng*). Their curricula drew upon Japanese and Western models and included natural sciences, mathematics, foreign languages, world geography, physical education, and other subjects that had gained importance due to the changing geopolitical status of China.¹³ This modernized education system was also implemented in Xinjiang. According to recent research, approximately six hundred new schools functioned throughout the province by 1911 with about fifteen thousand students. The schools were intended to educate children from all social backgrounds, and their attendance was theoretically mandatory for boys. But although the new system did contain some aspects that were attractive for local Turkic Muslims, such as an emphasis on teaching technical subjects instead of those that would facilitate cultural change, initial instruction in Turkic, and the inclusion of Qur'an classes into the curriculum, it still remained largely unpopular among the indigenous Muslim population. One reason was economic; additional taxes were levied by the provincial administration in order to fund schools. Another reason was cultural; similar to traditional Confucian schools, modern schools

13 The degree of modernity in the new schools has been disputed, according to assertions that the primary purpose of the new education system was to strengthen students' loyalty to the Qing dynasty. Confucianism, seen as one of crucial instruments in promoting this goal, remained an essential part of the “new” curriculum (Chuzo 1980, 180, 182).

also required students to wear Chinese dress and style their hair like Qing subjects. This measure incurred opposition by local Muslims. For this reason, the practice of sending substitute children, mostly belonging to poorer neighbors, to Chinese schools was a frequent phenomenon (Millward 2005, 268–71; Millward 2007, 143–46).

The situation in the sphere of Chinese education underwent only minor changes during the early Republican administration of Yang Zengxin and Jin Shuren. Modern elementary schools continued to be mandatory for boys, theoretically, and their overt purpose was educating elite Muslim children with the aim of fostering loyal civil servants. As such, the modern Chinese schools continued to be unattractive for local Muslims, and purchasing substitute children for school attendance remained customary (Ezizi 1997a, 132). Secondary schools existed only in major centers, such as Urumchi or Ghulja. In 1920, Yang established a school for training Mongol and Kazak civil servants and, in 1923, the Xinjiang Russian School of Law and Politics (新疆俄文法政專門學校 *Xīnjiāng Éwén fǎzhèng zhuānmén xuéxiào*, *Xinjiang Rusche Qanun-Siyasi Mektivi*) in Urumchi. Contemporary sources further state that the only official vocational school in the province was a technical school for drivers in Urumchi, and the first school for instructing female administrative officials was established in Urumchi during Jin Shuren's era (Burhan 1986, 214, 271; Ezizi 1997a, 129–30).

Traditional Islamic learning institutions, or old method, schools (*usul-i qedim*) available to Muslims of Xinjiang prior to the emergence of modern Turkic schools functioned in essentially the same way as described in the case of Russian Central Asia (Khalid 1998, 22–34). Elementary schools (*maktab*) were usually affiliated with mosques in a particular neighborhood (*mehelle*) of a town or city and were run by the imam or another religious notable. There was no standardized curriculum or a central supervising authority, and the teacher (*akhunum* or *khelipitim*) taught according to his individual knowledge and skills. The arbitrarily determined curriculum was based on studying Arabic religious, as well as Persian and Turkic literary, texts. Students were expected to memorize and recite these texts fluently, often without understanding their meaning or being able to explain it in their mother tongue. Except for writing and simple math, no technical subjects or skills were taught because subjects such as simple counting, astronomy, chemistry, history, and geography were considered by the clergy to be anti-Islamic. All students shared one classroom regardless of their proficiency level, and each proceeded according to his own pace under the supervision of the teacher or one of the older classmates. There was no fixed examination or grading system. No specific time was set for the beginning, duration, and end of classes since instruction unfolded according

to the needs of a teacher's daily agenda. Corporal punishment was frequently used—the parents would turn the child over to the teachers saying, “The child's bones are mine, but his flesh is yours” (*balining ustikhini méning, göshi silining*; Janishif 2001, 92). Tuition was paid every Thursday in cash or kind, such as clothes, fabric, or food.

Secondary learning institutions (*madrasa*) worked in a similar way. The curriculum was broadened to memorization and recitation of the whole Qur'an, Arabic, counting, Persian, philosophy, Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), Chaghatay literary works, and other subjects. As was the case in other Islamic regions, madrasas trained experts in Islamic law and education and thus served as the locus of the reproduction of the fundamentals of Islam (Janishif 2001, 89–93; Bellér-Hann 2008, 326–33). By the end of the Qing dynasty, the traditional way of education (labeled by Jadids and other progressives as the “old” way of education, *usul-i qadam*) failed to respond to objectives of nascent modernity. On the contrary, it augmented the position of conservative religious dignitaries (*qedimchi*) and thus also their subsequent power alliance with anti-modernist Yang. As aptly remarked in the case of traditional Islamic schools in Czarist Russia, “Maktabs and madrasas of Central Asia were the clearest sign of the stagnation, if not the degeneracy, of Central Asia” (Khalid 1998, 20).

Modern Turkic Education in Xinjiang

Probably the earliest promoters of modern Turkic education (*penniy ma'arip*) in Xinjiang, which was literally a scientific education, were the wealthy and influential Musabay clan of the Atush-Kashgar area. Allegedly, the Musabays' first known involvement with education dates from the mid-nineteenth century, when Abdurusul Akhun Bay (dates unknown) and his son Musabay Haji (1809–95) sponsored the reconstruction of schools and accumulated a large private collection of books. Musabay's sons, Hüsenbay Haji (1844–1926) and Bawudun Bay (1851–1928) are credited with pioneering the introduction of supplementary secular subjects into the curriculum of the prominent Khanliq madrasa of Kashgar in 1870. The structure of classes was modeled on European examples intercepted via Tatar and Ottoman modern schools and included math, the mother language, geography, physical education, art, poetry, and other subjects. However, these courses were soon discontinued due to pressure from conservative circles. Therefore, around the mid-1880s the Musabays decided to relocate the center of their activities to their home village of Êqsaq near Atush (approximately forty kilometers from Kashgar), where they launched a modern school and a pedagogical institute called the Hüseyniye.

According to one source, the school taught a number of secular subjects, as well as Qur'anic classes (Table 2.1). On the elementary level, the children

started school attendance at the age of nine or ten and studied for six to seven years, while at the teachers' college, learning took four years. In the first year, there was an alleged enrollment of 105 students, including 25 girls. The school had separated classrooms and introduced a fixed system of examinations, grading marks, and a graduation certificate. The students could also apply for a spending allowance or accommodations. The school compound and teaching equipment was luxurious for the time and included a performance stage, library, showers, and classrooms with windows, chairs, desks, and blackboards. Subsequently, physical education classes based on the Ottoman model were also implemented as part of the curriculum. The name of the teachers' college was allegedly changed to Hebib Zade Pedagogical Institute in 1907 (Khushtar 2000a, 215–21; Schleussel 2009, 386).

TABLE 2.1 *Schedule at the Hüseyniye school in its early years*

	1st Period	2nd Period	3rd Period	4th Period
Saturday	Health	Orthography	Poetry	Mathematics
Sunday	Arabic	History	Geography	Qur'an
Monday	Russian	Mathematics	Ph. Education	Art
Tuesday	Qur'an	Health	Geography	–
Wednesday	Arabic	Orthography	Russian	History
Thursday	Qur'an	Qur'an	Qur'an	Qur'an
Friday	–	–	–	–

Khushtar 2000a, 221

A notable trait of modern education in the Kashgar area was its inspiration by Ottoman practice and ideology. Around 1913, the Musabay brothers contracted several Ottoman pedagogues from Istanbul to teach at their school in Xinjiang. The leading figure of the Ottoman group was Ahmet Kemal İlkul, other members were Ababekri Ependi, Imir Molla, Abdurakhman Ependi, Mukerrem Qari, Sami Ependi, and Amrulla Ependi. All were members of the above-mentioned nationalistic and partially pan-Turkist organization, the CUP, and were also affiliated with its paramilitary arm, called the Special Organization (*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*). Kemal and his colleagues had been active in Atush and Kashgar since 1914 and implemented several principles of Turkish nationalism and pan-Turkism in their teaching, such as instruction in Ottoman Turkish, pledging

allegiance to the Sultan, marching, and singing nationalistic marching songs. Their activities subsequently incurred opposition by the *qedimchi*, who were supported by the provincial administration. As a result, the authorities swiftly had the modernist schools closed down and forbade the Ottoman Turks, as well as all other foreign pedagogues, to teach in Xinjiang. Ahmet Kemal continued contacts with his students in secret until 1917, when he was arrested and deported via Shanghai back to the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴ This ominous clash revealed that modernist activities directly violated the interests of both the Yang administration and conservative clergy (Ezizi 1997a, 146; Burhan 1986, 172; Khushtar 2000a, 224; Khushtar 2000b, 252; Shinjiro 2000, 25–27; Schleussel 2009, 386–87). Conversely, the resistance of the influential Islamic establishment to modernism was a recurrent impediment to the potential spread of new education and other attributes of modernity in Muslim communities (not only) in Xinjiang (Ezizi 1997a, 144–45; Janishif 2001, 71; Abdusémetov 1991, 58; Khalid 1998, 4). For instance, a respected Uyghur historian and linguist, Ibrahim Muti'i, recalled that the conservatives called bicycles the “devil's vehicles” (*sheytan harwa*) and that his older brother Jamal, who was allegedly the first person to bring a bicycle from the Soviet Union and ride it on the streets of Urumchi, was hence nicknamed “Jamal the Devil” (*Jamal Sheytan*; 1990, 387; Clark 2012, 206–207). Similarly, the noun “modernist” (*jedid*) was sometimes used in a derogatory sense (MEP 2000, 21).

Hüseyiniye was probably the most progressive institute of learning in southern Xinjiang during the period 1884–1933. Its graduates were able to make use of a relatively vast body of knowledge and skills and enjoyed high social prestige. They were the first generation of secular teachers who, in turn, established modern schools across the whole province. Most educated prominent Turkic intellectuals and politicians of the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s, and later obtained their education at the Hüseyiniye or one of its sequel schools. Due to the Ottoman pan-Turkist influence, the students at these schools were also the first to encounter ideas of national awakening and national movement. The Musabay clan also provided material support to anti-Qing Ili revolutionaries in 1911 (Schleussel 2009, 387). Thus, the Hüseyiniye education had a strong impact on the emergence of a network of progressive Uyghur intelligentsia that still functions today, and the Musabay brothers are revered as founders of modern Uyghur education and enlightenment, accordingly. The progressive spirit of Hüseyiniye education is well illustrated by an Ottoman-style marching song allegedly sung by the school's athletes on the sports field in the 1910s:

14 Ahmet Kemal İlku'l's own account of his experience in Xinjiang and China is available in his memoir, republished in modern Turkish (1997).

Fellow fighters, let us join up to overthrow smothering ideology,
To rip the curtains of darkness that are covering the eyes of the
motherland,
Knowledge is what will deliver our people from ignorance,
And also we shall be delivered by knowledge today. (Khushtar 2000a, 227)

The emergence of modern education in the northern and eastern parts of the province was, in turn, influenced by their geographical proximity to Russian Central Asia. It was easy for prosperous Muslim entrepreneurs to travel from Xinjiang cities, such as Ghulja, Chöchek, Urumchi, and Turfan, into Russian territory and experience local modernity. The contact also functioned in the other direction—Russian nationals involved in commerce had become increasingly present in northern and eastern Xinjiang since the end of the nineteenth century. This interaction was accelerated by the presence of Russian consulates, all of which, with the exception of Kashgar, were located in northern Xinjiang. As in western Central Asia, the mediators of contact between Russia and the Xinjiang Muslims were predominantly Tatar merchants who simultaneously imported their progressive ideas and institutions into Xinjiang. Tatar businessmen started settling in northern Xinjiang cities in 1851, mainly in Ghulja, Chöchek, and Urumchi, and gradually extended their activities into culture and politics. Hence these cities, especially Ghulja, became cosmopolitan arenas, bustling with commercial, cultural, and political interaction between their Chinese and Russian Turkic subjects (Burhan 1986, 175).

The cruciality of Tatar involvement in the formation of modern Turkic education in Xinjiang was thoroughly analyzed by a Xinjiang Tatar scholar (Janishif 2001). As a result of long-term business sojourns or permanent resettlement to Xinjiang, Russian Tatars started founding their own mosques with affiliated schools, which naturally functioned as communal cultural centers. The first Tatar madrasa was reportedly founded in Urumchi in 1880, and around 1900, traditional Tatar schools started transforming into modern ones. Due to close ties between Xinjiang Tatars and their relatives in Russian territory, Tatar schools in Xinjiang were able to directly and quickly adopt conventions of Russian Muslim modernism. In particular, Tatar schools in Xinjiang used curriculum, textbooks, and even teachers from Jadidist schools in Tatar cities, such as Kazan, Ufa, or Orenburg. As of 1914, Tatar schools for girls were also coming into existence. Some of the Jadidist schools also ran teacher training courses or libraries on their premises, such as the important Miryusup library in Chöchek or the Hüseyin Taratov library in Ghulja (Muti'i 1990, 385). The education given to Xinjiang Tatar children also was available to other ethnic groups, including local Turkic Muslims. Many prominent Xinjiang Turkic

intellectuals, such as the aforementioned Ibrahim Muti'i, were educated at Tatar Jadidist schools (Janishif 2001, 53–76; Schleussel 2009, 387).

Tatar teachers contracted from Tatarstan often constituted the core of the teaching staff at schools founded by Xinjiang Jadids. A model example of this phenomenon is the cooperation of affluent Turfan businessman and enlightener Mekhsut Muhiti (1885–1932) with Tatar teacher and progressive intellectual Heyder Sayrani (1886–1943). The two became acquainted in 1909 during Muhiti's trip to Kazan. Later that year, Sayrani arrived in Turfan and became the Muhiti family's private tutor. The first Jadidist teachers' college, with Sayrani as the primary instructor, was launched in the Turfan area in 1913 and used teaching materials published in Kazan. In 1918–19, six other Tatar teachers from Russia arrived and started teaching at Jadidist schools founded by the Muhitis and their associates in the Turfan region. Heyder Sayrani was also involved in other forms of cultural activism, such as the secret distribution of Central Asian Jadidist and/or communist periodicals or lobbying for government sponsorship of a student exchange between Xinjiang and Soviet Central Asia (Sayrani 2000, 58–66).¹⁵ Other Tatar Jadids taught at modern schools in Ghulja, Chöchek, Komul, Altay, Börtala, and other places in northern and eastern Xinjiang throughout the 1910s and 1920s. Tatar Jadids were also present on the Hüseyiniye teaching staff (Janishif 2001, 93–110). In summary, the Tatar Jadidist influence in the north and east combined with the indigenous Turkic progressive initiative and enabled the rise of a modern education system that was, in turn, the key factor behind the emergence of new, nationally conscious intelligentsia of Xinjiang Turkic Muslims.

Nascent Turkic Periodicals and Social Organizations

Perhaps the first occasion when Turkic Muslims of southern Xinjiang directly encountered systematic modern printing was via the activities of foreign Christian missionaries. The most extensive efforts were undertaken by the Swedish Mission Society (Sw. *Svenska Missionsförbundet*), which had branches

15 The Turfan group eventually became strongly politicized. Since 1922, both Muhiti and Sayrani took part in secret political societies. Mekhsut Muhiti was allegedly killed during the Komul rebellion of 1931, and his body was dismembered on the battlefield near Lükchün. He is acknowledged as one of the most influential and accomplished leaders of the early modern Uyghur national movement (Ezizi 1997a, 211). His brother, Mahmud Muhiti (1887–1944), took part in the rebellion as well. After 1933, he became a military officer of the provincial army in the Kashgar region, where he also promoted modern education (his activities are further mentioned in Chapter 3). Heyder Sayrani had to move to Chöchek in the late 1930s for personal safety reasons but still was arrested in 1938 and, together with other political prisoners, executed in Ürümqi in 1943.

in Kashgar, Yéngissar, and Yarkend in 1892–1938. Due to the limited success of their proselytizing activities among local Muslims, the missionaries also pursued a number of philanthropic activities, such as medical care, education, vocational training, gathering of Turkic folklore and literature, and compilation of dictionaries. They also launched Xinjiang's first printing machine in approximately 1905 and started publishing materials in the local Turkic language, which they referred to as Eastern Turki (Jarring 1964, Jarring 1981). Printed matter naturally included missionary materials, such as a translation of the Bible into the local Turkic language. A publication title of enormous cultural significance for the Xinjiang Turkic population was the missionaries' translation of the Holy Qur'an into Eastern Turki. They also printed Eastern Turki textbooks on subjects such as the natural sciences, mathematics, Eastern Turki grammar and spelling, world geography and Central Asian history, translations of Western fiction, and the region's first Eastern Turki calendar, all for the missionary schools. The mission also took on printing for the provincial or insurgent authorities, producing banknotes, leaflets, political pamphlets, and nationalist periodicals.¹⁶ The Swedish mission's printing, publishing, and other activities stimulated the cultural development of Turkic Muslim society in southern Xinjiang and contributed indirectly to the emergence of modern Uyghur ideas of nation and nationalism.

One of the earliest publication enterprises run by indigenous Turkic Muslims in southern Xinjiang was reportedly a lithographic printing house established by the Musabays even earlier than the missionary presses. In the 1890s, they founded a printing house called "Sunshine Press, Source of Light" (in Persian *Metbe-i Khurshid*, *Metel-i Nuri*) in Atush or Kashgar. This modest project was associated with leading modernist intellectuals and poets of the time, Tejelli (1850–1930), Abduqadir Damolla (1862–1924), and Qutluq Haji Shewqi (1876–1937). Qutluq Haji Shewqi is an illustrative example of an early modern Xinjiang Turkic modernist. As a child, he acquired a classical education in Kashgar and then continued his studies in Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, and Bukhara. He was heavily influenced by Ottoman modernist ideals and pursued them after his return to Xinjiang, becoming a promoter of modern education publishing and the author of poems and articles advocating progress and reform. Since 1910 (according to other sources from 1918), Qutluq Haji Shewqi was the editor of the *Awareness Newspaper* (*Ang Géziti*), which was published

16 For more information on the Swedish mission's activities in southern Xinjiang, see the catalogue of the publishing house by Gunnar Jarring (1991). Printing of Christian religious material in the Uyghur language was also undertaken, though to a lesser degree, by the British China Inland Mission branch based in Urumchi (Cable and French 1927, 244–47; Himit 2000, 44).

by the Musabay brothers' Sunshine Press.¹⁷ The newspaper's publication had to be discontinued soon after due to economic hardship and conservative pressures. Nevertheless, the Sunshine Press allegedly continued to produce books and textbooks for modern education throughout the 1920s (Tursunjan 2000, 172–78; Zaman n.d., 95–99).

Another early publishing attempt in Turkic was the *Ili Vernacular Daily* (伊犁白話報 *Yīlí báihuà bào*), which was issued by the aforementioned Ili revolutionaries in Ghulja beginning March 25, 1910. Its main language was Chinese, but the paper also appeared in Turkic, Manchu, and Mongol mutations.¹⁸ Publication of the *Ili Vernacular Daily* was discontinued by Manchu General of Ili (伊犁將軍 *Yīlí jiàngjūn*) Zhi Rui (志銳) shortly after he took office on November 15, 1911. In February 1912, the paper was succeeded by the *New Daily* (新報 *Xīnbào*), which also ran its Turkic edition. The *New Daily* came to an end shortly after Yang Zengxin eliminated the Ghulja faction in December 1913 (Wei 1998, 50–55). The articles published by Ghulja revolutionaries with the aim of targeting Xinjiang Turkic Muslims advocated unity among all local nationalities against Manchu rule. One of their arguments was that the Qing had several times in history resorted to massacres of indigenous populations, be it the Hans during the conquest of southern China or Xinjiang Turkic Muslims during the post-Yaqup Beg reconquest (Millward 2007, 166). The revolutionaries also espoused the principle of equality among the five Xinjiang nationalities (Han, Mongol, Hui, Turkic, and Kazak, 漢蒙回纏哈 *Hàn Měng Huí Chán Hā*)¹⁹ and denounced the derogatory labeling of Turkic Muslims used at the time even in official documents (e.g., “Turban-Head” Muslim or “Rag-Head” Muslim, 纏頭 *Chántóu*; or “Dog-Muslim,” written by the character 回 with the dog radical). As a result, the Ghulja revolutionary cause is said to have enjoyed a fairly high credibility among Xinjiang non-Han nationalities (Ezizi 1997a, 83, 86–87). Through the *Ili Vernacular Daily* and the *New Daily*, Xinjiang Musulman for the first time encountered revolutionary ideals and principles of modern Chinese republicanism, which forwarded the idea of a multinational state that comprised several ethnic groups equal in rights and obligations. During Jin's era, the Chinese language *Tianshan Daily* (天山日報 *Tiānshān rìbào*) was published in Urumchi (*LET* 1), which rhetorically embraced the ideology of Chinese republicanism. Nevertheless, it is likely

17 Qutluq Haji Shewqi's activities are further mentioned in Chapter 3.

18 According to another source, the Uyghur version of the *Ili Vernacular Daily* was published in 1912 (Burhan 1986, 33).

19 The Ghulja revolutionaries' idea of five constituent nationalities of Xinjiang may have been inspired by the theory of the five-nationalities' republicanism asserted by revolutionaries in China proper.

that the ideology from China proper spread only in areas of Xinjiang with a sizeable Han presence (such as the heavily garrisoned northern or eastern Xinjiang neighboring on China proper), and therefore, a smaller Turkic presence. On the other hand, the following sections of this chapter show that at least isolated Turkic intellectuals were familiar with and supportive of the ideology of Chinese republicanism.

Burhan Shehidi (1894–1989), a Russian Tatar who was later to become one of the most influential and remarkable figures of modern Xinjiang history, related in his memoir that he and his close friend, Mirzajan, clandestinely published a Turkic language magazine *New Life* (*Yéngi Hayat*) in 1922. Burhan contributed under the pseudonym *Küntughdi*.²⁰ The magazine allegedly propagated self-cultivation by means of reading literary works and leading a healthy lifestyle. In total, Burhan and Mirzajan produced a mere two issues of over ten pages each and secretly distributed about one hundred copies of each issue in many shops of Urumchi (Burhan 1986, 226). Similarly, a newspaper called *Our Voice* (*Bizning Tawush*) was allegedly published around 1920 in Chöchek (Sayrani 2000, 65; Tashbayof 2001, 58–59). Another figure active in publishing and printing was Hüseyinbeg Yunusov, who purchased printing equipment from western Central Asia and established a printing house in the Ili region in 1918. In 1920, the enterprise was relocated to Ghulja, where it was used for printing schoolbooks. Abduqadir Damolla (1862–1924), one of the most influential Turkic modernist intellectuals, installed a lithographic printing machine in Kashgar at the beginning of the twentieth century and used it for publishing his essays and school textbooks. The enterprise was destroyed after his assassination in 1924. Another Kashgari, Muhemmet Akhun Khelplitim, used self-carved wooden type to print religious materials. Another person involved in printing activities at the time was Haji Nurhaji in Yéngissar (Himit 2000, 43–44; Tursunjan 2000, 175–76).

Although it is possible that there were probably more printing and publishing attempts by Xinjiang Turkic Muslims in the late Qing and early Republican eras than those mentioned above, it is likely that their impact was rather limited. One reason was their restricted circulation; in fact, several contemporary sources specifically remark on the total absence of periodicals in Xinjiang at the time (Abdusémetov 1991, 95; Ezizi 1997a, 129; Burhan 1986, 214). Another factor was the high illiteracy rate of the Turkic Muslim population in the early modern era. Nonetheless, these attempts, augmented by the impact of Turkic periodicals that were occasionally smuggled into the province from abroad,

20 *Küntughdi* was a name of one the characters in an ancient Uyghur classic *Qutadghu Bilig* (*Happiness-Bringing Wisdom*) written by Yüsüp Khas Hajib in 1069/1070.

did play a role similar to the above-discussed nation-formation processes in Russian and Ottoman Turkic communities by contributing to the spread of modernity in Xinjiang, improving the cultural standard of local readership, cultivating indigenous progressive intelligentsia, and accelerating the emergence of the national identity of Xinjiang Turkic Muslims.

Another form of nascent modernity in Xinjiang came in the form of emerging new social structures and organizations. In particular, it was the various cultural associations and philanthropic organizations, which promoted cultural activities and thus contributed to the emergence of a Uyghur national consciousness. One of them was the Philanthropic Charity Association (*Kheyrlhsan Birleshmisi*) established in Kashgar in 1914 in relation to the modernist activities of Abduqadir Damolla (Shinjiro 2000, 25). Another secret reformist organization was reportedly established in August 1922 by Burhan Shehidi and several other progressives, including Mekhsut Muhiti, Yunus Beg, Tahir Beg, and Heyder Sayrani, who became Shehidi's brother-in-law in 1925 (Burhan 1986, 226–27, 307–9; Sayrani 2000, 64). However, in contrast to modern education, both new publishing and organizational initiatives emerged sporadically and clandestinely because such phenomena were even more closely scrutinized by Yang's authorities than new schools or publications. The progressive organizations' arguably limited impact in Xinjiang was similar to the situation in Soviet Central Asia (Khalid 1998, 133–34).

Several scholars have pointed to the correlation between the emergence of modern education, the press, and social organizations with nation-formation processes. One study has argued that education plays an essential part in the effective functioning of modern society (Gellner 1983, 27–38), while another one has equated the progress of schools throughout the world with the spread of nationalism (Hobsbawm 1996, 135–36). Clearly, in Xinjiang between 1880 and 1930 the modern Turkic education was by no means widespread, standardized, or disseminated by state administration. Instead, the first progressive education projects were launched by private enthusiasts at their own expense and intended to cultivate a society that, despite their efforts, remained largely preindustrial and agricultural at least until 1949 (Bellér-Hann 2008, 11). Similarly, early Turkic printing and publishing in Xinjiang can hardly be called print capitalism, producing hundreds of thousands of volumes and generating financial profit, as illustrated by another scholar (Anderson 1991, 33–36). On the contrary, the first Xinjiang Turkic periodicals circulated most probably free of charge and only within a very limited scope of literate and mutually acquainted readers, while the information contained in the periodicals was further transmitted orally. The impact of modern social structures, such as enlightenment societies and charitable unions, was equally limited.

The situation in Xinjiang Turkic milieu was similar to Central Asia, where “Jadidism had constantly to maneuver between the twin peril of a weak market and a hostile colonial state in order to propagate its reform” (Khalid 1998, 115). Nevertheless, the progressive Turkic schools and the albeit sporadic, yet nonetheless existent, attempts at issuing periodicals and forming philanthropic organizations were the most significant stimuli to the spread of modern knowledge and cultural enlightenment within Xinjiang Musulman society between the 1880s and late 1920s. Xinjiang modern schools, periodicals, societies, and other structures also cultivated and provided an organizational basis for the activities of progressive activists. Subsequent sections of this study will show that local modern Turkic intelligentsia and elites who were educated by or affiliated with these structures played a leading role in local Turkic politics and in various ways generated a modern Uyghur national consciousness and national movement.

2.3 Uyghur National Idea in Russo-Soviet Central Asia

Earlier, this chapter described how Xinjiang Turkic enlighteners drew inspiration from progressive activists in Russo-Soviet Central Asia and the Ottoman Empire/Turkey. Besides emulating their modernist approach to education, publishing, and social networking, Xinjiang Turkic innovators also drew inspiration from observing the world through a prism of national identities. They were even able to directly appropriate the idea of the Uyghur nation, for it was probably in Russo-Soviet Central Asia where they first encountered this concept. Introduction of the term “Uyghur” is a truly fascinating story about how a historical name for a medieval tribal confederacy, which has fallen out of use for several centuries, has been revived to name a modern ethnic and national community.

The term “Uyghur” had been associated with the term *Toqquz Oghuz* (“Nine Oghuz”; in Chinese 九姓 *Jiǔxìng*, “Nine Surnames”), a tribal confederacy that formed a prospering dynasty in today’s Mongolia along the Orkhon River between the mid-seventh and the mid-ninth centuries (Mackerras 1990, 317–20). Today, there is not a definitive scholarly agreement on the meaning and etymology of the term “Uyghur.” Similarly, the ethnic origin of the Uyghurs is one of the most contested topics among Uyghur, Chinese, and Western scholars. Some theories describe the Uyghurs as descendants of different proto-Turkic tribes of inner Asia, known in Chinese sources as Dingling (丁零), Gaoju (sometimes known as Gaoche, 高車), or Tiele (鐵勒; Tursun 2008, 92; Millward 2007, 42–43). Ancient Uyghurs themselves are in Tang sources

transcribed as *Huǐhé* (回鹘 or 回紇). Other assertions interpret the word “Uyghur” as meaning “unity” or “civilization” (Muti’i 1990, 382) or referring to the fact that the ancient Uyghur tribes inhabited river valleys (from Turkic *on ghur*, “ten rivers” or *on ghul*, “ten gorges”; Hebibulla 2000, 52).

After the Orkhon Uyghur state collapsed in 840 from attacks by the Kyrgyz, Uyghurs migrated south and settled in portions of the Xinjiang territory (as well as in the Hexi corridor in the Gansu province).²¹ In the northeastern portion of the Tarim Basin, the newly arrived Turkic Uyghurs mixed with the predominantly Iranian population of local city states, whereas in eastern and northern Xinjiang they formed a kingdom called Uyghuristan²² with Beshbaliq (Pentapolis; in Persian *Panjkent*, near today’s Urumchi) and Qocho (near today’s Turfan) as capitals. This culturally and economically advanced state, with Buddhism and Manicheism as its primary religions, ruled the area from Komul to Kucha. Meanwhile, since the ninth century, Uyghuristan’s potent adversaries were the Qarakhanids, a confederation of Turkic tribes which formed in the western part of the Tarim Basin, Semirechie, and Transoxania. In the late tenth century, the Qarakhanids initiated the conversion of the Xinjiang region to Islam. During this process, they viewed the Buddhist and Manicheist Uyghuristan as an infidel adversary, and the term “Uyghur” thus for them gained derogative connotations (Millward 2007, 40–56; Soucek 2000, 55–56, 77–92; Golden 1990, 354–58; Golden 2009a, 16–17; Geng 1984, 11; Kamalov 2006, 18–21).

Since the twelfth century when the whole of today’s Xinjiang passed under the control of the Qarakhitay, and since the late thirteenth century when the whole region found itself in the realm of the descendants of Chaghatay Khan (1183–1241), the second son of Chinggis Khan (lived probably 1162–1227), Uyghurs served as scribes and educators, and Uyghur culture had a unique position within the Chinggisid realm. Uyghur writing, derived from Sogdian, became the basis for Mongolian (later also Manchurian) scripts. Chaghatayid elites gradually converted to Islam and simultaneously retained their nominal adherence to a Mongol nomadic heritage. Since the mid-fourteenth century,

21 Uyghurs settled in the Hexi corridor, sometimes referred to as the Yellow Uyghurs (*Sarigh Uyghur*), eventually formed today’s Yugur (*Yùgù* 裕固) minority.

22 It was remarked that the geographical proximity of Uyghuristan to China and the fact that the character Hui (回) denoted both “Uyghur” and “Islam” has contributed to the emergence of a notion common in modern China, which perceived all the Turks of eastern Turkestan as Uyghurs (Fletcher 1968, 363). Chapter 4 shows how the error led to Republican China’s confusion over the concepts “Uyghur,” “Turkic,” “Turkic-speaking Muslim,” and “Chinese-speaking Muslim.”

the increasingly Islamicized Tarim and Turfan Basin, along with Jungharia and the territory between the Yaxartes River (Syr Darya) and Lake Balkhash, became known as Moghulistan (Soucek 2000, 23–24; Golden 2009b, 116), where the Dughlats constituted the most prominent clan. By the late fourteenth century, the Dughlats also incorporated the territory of Uyghuristan (Millward 2007, 56–72; Soucek 2000, 121–22). Since the fifteenth century, the use of the term “Uyghur” gradually declined, surviving occasionally in toponyms, and effectively disappeared as a tribal or clan name (Golden 2009b, 117; Millward 2009, 260–67; Kamalov 2006, 21–23).

The process of the modern reintroduction of the ancient name “Uyghur” for an ethnic and national community of indigenous Xinjiang settled Turkic Muslims, who at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries used the autonym “Musulman,” probably started in the minds of Western and Russian scholars. German linguist Julius Heinrich Klaproth (1783–1835) in the 1820s and Kazak explorer Chokan Valikhanov (1835–65) in the 1850s pointed to the direct genetic, linguistic, and cultural connections between ancient Uyghurs and the inhabitants of early modern southern Xinjiang (Brophy 2005, 169–70). As the Central Asian Turkic Jadids and progressives were interested in the culture and history of all Turkic nations and ethnic groups, they also became acquainted with this assertion and introduced it into their discourse and activities. The idea also gained popularity among immigrants and intellectuals originating in Xinjiang. These were primarily those with roots in southern Xinjiang called Kashgaris or Altishahris (in English, “inhabitants of the Six Cities”), who lived predominantly in urban areas of today’s Uzbekistan. The second group was the Taranchis, who originated in northern Xinjiang and migrated mainly to the western part of the Ili valley (also called Yettisu; *Semirechiye*; in English would correspond to “Seven Rivers Region” or “Heptapotamia”) and Almaty. At least from the early 1910s, some intellectuals and progressives from these two communities increasingly started perceiving Xinjiang indigenous settled Turkic Muslims as a single ethnic group called the Uyghurs.

A good example of a modernist Taranchi intellectual who subscribed to the idea of the southern Xinjiang Turkic inhabitants’ descent from ancient Uyghurs was Nezerghoja Abdusémetov (1887–?), who published under the pseudonym *Uyghur Balisi* (“Uyghur Child”). The details of his personal life are not well known. He was a son of an educated participant in the Taranchi-Tungan uprising in Ghulja during the 1860s (mentioned in Chapter 1). His family migrated to the western part of the Ili valley in the wake of its eastern part being returned to the Qing administration under provisions of the Treaty of St. Petersburg (1881). Abdusémetov attended traditional maktab, but he gradually became involved in the Jadidist movement by contributing articles to Jadidist

periodicals, such as the very influential, progressive, Orenburg-published Tatar paper, *Council (Shura)*, which circulated throughout the whole Turkic world, including Xinjiang. After 1917, Abdusémetov supported the communist movement and wrote for Turkic Soviet periodicals of Central Asia. Additionally, he also wrote poetry and prose. He fled to Xinjiang following the Soviet ethnic policy shift and Stalinist policies of the 1930s (Roberts 2009, 367–68, 374; Brophy 2005, 170–71), where he reportedly died in the 1950s.

A selection of Abdusémetov's articles and literary pieces was republished under the title *Bright Shores [of Knowledge]* (*Yorug Sahillar*; 1991). It is namely a collection of his journalistic works, authored between 1911 and 1923, which provide considerable insight into Taranchi society and the mindset of Taranchi progressives in the early twentieth century. Significant space is devoted to historical issues. In the longest entry in the anthology, the "Taranchi History" ("Taranchi Tarikhi"; 9–62), Abdusémetov attempted to draw up a complete history of Taranchis in Ili, the "all-time residence site of Taranchi people" (10). Similar to traditional Turko-Islamic historical works, Abdusémetov's initial narrative covered the mythical origins of Turkic ethnicity—ancient tribes (including Uyghurs) living in Ili and the Six Cities²³ region in Chaghatayid and Jungharid periods. He also dedicated a large space to the historical past of the Taranchi community. Interestingly, Abdusémetov did not mention the fact that the first power to resettle agriculturalists from the Six Cities to the north had been the Junghars. Instead, he identified the origins of Taranchi people with Qing relocations. According to Abdusémetov, the Chinese emperor entrusted a certain Emin Wang with the project. Emin Wang sent his son Musa Gong,²⁴ who had six thousand households of farmers moved to the Ili valley in 1765. Thereupon, these migrants were named "Taranchi," meaning "a peasant, cultivator" (Abdusémetov 1991, 20–21). The narrative then continues through the 1860s anti-Qing rebellion in Ili and the regions' annexation by Russia to the Taranchi migration westwards after the eastern part of Ili was returned to the Qing in 1881.

Other parts of "Taranchi History" and other entries in the anthology dealt with contemporary conditions of the Taranchis and disclosed Abdusémetov's modernist ideas with typically Jadidist educative overtones. The following statement is illustrative: "We have composed this handbook entitled 'Taranchi

23 For Abdusémet, the Six Cities were Kashgar, Yarkend, Aksu, Kucha, Turfan, and Khotan (Abdusémetov 1991, 132).

24 The title *gong* probably originated from the rank 公 *gōng* (prince), which was an indicator of indirect rule granted by the Qing authority to local officials in the Turfan and Komul area.

History' in order to acquaint Taranchi children with events of their own history" (Abdusémetov 1991, 10). Bearing in mind that the Taranchis were a moderate and not a particularly well-known community within the Turkic world, Abdusémetov dedicated a great part of his journalistic articles to descriptions of contemporary life, social issues, and dissonances within Taranchi society. One article described the Taranchi people as "generally civilized" (*umumen medeniy*), living in clean buildings arranged in straight streets. Villages were very peaceful, and youth occupy themselves with study. However, since the Taranchis did not establish the custom of educating women, the household upbringing of children was deficient, and Taranchi women are susceptible to superstitions. Some premodern practices also survived in medical care and religion, such as shamanism (*pére oyuni*) or Sufism (*ishanliq*). However, according to Abdusémetov, owing to the spread of periodicals after (the revolution of) 1905, the Taranchis became more knowledgeable of the world around them, started to notice their "various social deficiencies" (*türlük ijtimai'iy kem-chilikler*), criticized the old order, and worked toward reform. This resulted in tensions between the "young" (*yashlar*, i.e., "the reformists") and "old" (*qerilar*, i.e., "the traditionalists"). The latter derogatively called the former "short coats" (*kalte chapan*), according to the Western-style suit worn by the progressives, as opposed to traditional "long coats" (*uzun chapan*) worn by conservatives. However, as modernity gradually spread throughout the Taranchi society, the term "short coat" actually acquired positive connotations, so the traditionalists stopped using it. Eventually, all *maktabs* transformed into Jadidist, or "new method," schools (*usuli jedit mektiwi*) without encountering any opposition within Taranchi society (Abdusémetov 1991, 99–106). Abdusémetov specifically stated that the "awakening" (*oyghinish*) of the Taranchis occurred in the twentieth century, as opposed to that of the Tatars which took place in the nineteenth century:

We have said that the Taranchi Turks have entered the stage of awakening. The reason is that after 1905, they started associations bent on reforming *maktabs* and *madrasas*, opening Muslim (*musulmanche*) printing houses, sending children for education to government schools, welcoming national (*milliy*) periodicals, observing other developing nationalities (*millet*), learning from them, and caring more about their own situation. In other words, these are some of the signs of their awakening. (110)

At the same time, Abdusémetov did not hesitate to criticize the shortcomings of the new educational system. For instance, he identified the absence of a

standardized curriculum and a lack of trained teachers as the two main problems of a Taranchi Jadidist education:

It has been written in the newspaper *Ili Prefecture (Ili Wilayiti)*, published previously in Taranchi dialect: "Once a nation enters the world of progress (*tereqqiyat*) and civilization (*medeniyet*), in order to attain knowledge (*ilim*) and education (*ma'arip*), there is the primary need of elementary school teachers. This is an elementary principle. The standard of life, wealth, knowledge, and education is measured according to the size of their elementary education system. If a nation does not have elementary school teachers, then this nation is considered ignorant and uneducated." This means that without elementary school teachers, a nation cannot develop. . . . But at the moment, are there any teachers familiar with teaching methods and procedures of modern education in our Ili prefecture? If we think about it, alas, for sure there are not even five or ten of them. (121–22)

Abdusémetov's writings featured many other modernist concepts. Indications of his own religious affiliation were rare, neither did he refer to Westerners as infidels, using instead the emotionally neutral term of "foreigners" (*ejnabiyler*; 26). He also used the Christian calendar, as opposed to the Islamic one, and the system of longitude and latitude coordinates for determining the geographic location of the Ili valley (11). Abdusémetov's language contained Russian loanwords, such as *moda* (fashion) or *mikrob* (microbe; 103). Western and Russian civilization was regarded as advanced and inspiring, whereas the Qing administration was described as an obstruction to development (105, 108–9). Abdusémetov frequently used old vocabulary in new contexts. Notably, the word *millet*, which had been previously used by Turkic writers and historians in the sense of an ethnically undistinguished religious community of an empire or simply a community, acquired the meaning of nation or nationality in Abdusémetov's modernist discourse. The word *khelq*, which in late imperial era texts had possessed the connotations of common people (Sayrami 1988, 247), was instead used in the sense of a people or nation (Abdusémetov 1991, 32, 42). Similarly, the term *puqra*, which had also meant "common people" in premodern texts (Sayrami 1988, 32, 42, 182, 266), started to be used by Abdusémetov in the sense of "citizen" (32).

Abdusémetov's texts included in *Bright Shores* illustrate well that their author's perceptions of communal identity and interest was very different from those that existed in the premodern era, illustrated above by the writing

of Molla Musa Sayrami. Abdusémetov viewed his people as an ethnically defined nation with clear ethnic boundaries, a shared yet exclusive ethnonym, myth of descent, history, culture, territory, a feeling of solidarity, political aspirations, and other defining traits typical for the era of nations. He even retroactively perceived the Taranchis as a nation at the time of their resettlement in 1865. By frequently using the label “Taranchi Turks” (*Taranchi Türkler* or *Taranchi Türkliri*; Abdusémetov 1991, 69, 99, 108, 110, et al.), Abdusémetov also simultaneously recognized that the Taranchi nation belonged in the family of Turkic nations. As already asserted elsewhere, at the moment of the communist takeover of Central Asia in mid-1918, the identity of the Taranchi nation in the Yettisu-Almaty region was firmly consolidated in the minds of Taranchi intellectual elites. Some Taranchis even opposed the Bolsheviks by forming an autonomous administration and publishing their own paper called the *Taranchi Voice* (*Sada-i Taranchi*; Brophy 2005, 167).

Apart from articles describing Taranchi contemporary social reality in Czarist Russia, Abdusémetov also authored pieces dedicated to Xinjiang. His close attention to the fate of his Xinjiang Turkic compatriots was perhaps perpetuated by the Jadids' cross-border interest in the history and culture of Turkic nations, by the Taranchis' origins in Xinjiang, and by his father's fate during the anti-Qing insurgency. Abdusémetov's knowledge of Xinjiang and enthusiastic advocacy of the local Turkic people's cause grew after his journey to Aksu in 1914. His writings about Xinjiang featured typical Jadidist themes, such as the advocacy of progress and criticism of social problems. In Abdusémetov's terminology, “Chinese Turkestan” (*Chiniy Türkistan*; 67, 70, et al.) or “East Turkestan” (*Sherqiy Türkistan*; 94, 96, et al.) was a very backward territory lacking even the most basic cultural institutions and practices as a result of Chinese misadministration. As early as 1911, Abdusémetov noted that the East Turkestanis' social affairs were run by the religious establishment and that there were no Turkic schools or press. Modern Chinese schools founded by the Xinjiang government were too few, and the instruction was in Chinese, therefore, the schools were largely useless to Muslims (69–70). He also remarked that the condition of education in Chinese Turkestan had not changed since Noah's times, that the people in East Turkestan were living as they lived a thousand years ago, and that they had a gloomy future in front of them (94–95). He also noted the smothering authority of the clergy, wide-spread prostitution, and isolation from changes taking place even in inner China (132–42). In Abdusémetov's depiction, when compared to the situation of the Taranchis living in Russia, Xinjiang Turkic Muslims were living in a whole different world:

One Uyghur owed 15 *som* to a Han and was not able to repay, so he gave up his child instead of the money. This is our life. . . . This is the situation all over the place. Whoremongers, vagabonds, beggars, and gamblers have the strongest say in the society. Patriots and modernists are second-class people. (n.d.; 96)

Abdusémetov also articulated the idea of the modern Uyghur nation in a manner similar to efforts at fostering a Taranchi ethnic identity and national consciousness. Articles by David Brophy (2005), Ablet Kamalov (2006), and Sean Roberts (2009) argued that Abdusémetov was perhaps the very first Turkic enlightener known to adopt the academic thesis of a direct connection between the ancient Uyghurs and the contemporary Turkic settled population of eastern and southern Xinjiang oases. Throughout his works, Abdusémetov viewed the Turkic Muslims of Yettishahr as a distinct community that, despite the fact that they did not possess their own ethnic name, were genetic descendants of ancient Uyghurs:

We have said above that the Uyghurs of East Turkestan used to be called "Uyghurs" in the past and that they became nameless afterwards. Why is that? If you ask a local Turk who he is, he will answer: "A Kashgari" or "A Khotani." If you tell him that this is a toponym, he will immediately say: "I am a Muslim." If you tell him that you were not asking about his religion, he will say with a fright: "I am a Rag-Head." The ones who come into contact with Kazaks and Kyrgyz will tell you they are Sarts. It means that they do not know who they really are. What ignorance! (n.d.; 96)

In the past called "Uyghur," the now nameless Turkic people of East Turkestan are very unfortunate and miserable as regards their lives. We have seen it during our journey to Aksu in 1914. (n.d.; 94)

Although Abdusémetov predominantly used the terms "Six Cities' Turks" (*Altisheher Türkliri*; 25), "Six City residents" (*Altisheherlik*; 54), "Kashgar Turks" (*Kashghar Türkliri*; 117), or "Chinese Turkestan Turks" (*Chiniy Türkistan Türkliri*; 84) to label the southern Xinjiang Turkic population, on several occasions he directly called the contemporary Turkic inhabitants of southern Xinjiang by the name "Uyghur," which somewhat contradicted his own claim of their namelessness. Nevertheless, such instances in Abdusémetov's writings from the early 1910s are perhaps the first known instances of a progressive Turkic

intellectual wielding the ancient ethnonym “Uyghur” with the aim of disseminating the idea of a modern Uyghur nation:

Ninety-nine percent of people living now in the province of Six Cities in Chinese Turkestan are Uyghurs. (n.d.; 62)

The Turks (Uyghurs) of East Turkestan used the name “Chinggis” until now, meaning “strong,” “thorough,” “persevering,” “tough,” or “joyous.” (1912; 84)

We noticed that the future prospects of East Turkestan’s Uyghurs are dark, hazy, and scary. (n.d.; 95)

After Uyghurs in Russia developed their printing, and various newspapers were published, Taranchi Turks also started reading newspapers in greater numbers. (n.d.; 104)

Where is the motherland of our ancestors, the homeland of our cultured Uyghur forefathers? The great and strong Uyghur Khanate established by Islamic holy warriors vanished so quickly only because of the shadowy steps taken by traitors. (1914; 132)

When the official found out that we were Russian citizens, he immediately let us enter. Inside the fortress, a Uyghur official came forth. (1914; 136)

Additionally, as the choice of his penname “Uyghur Child” suggests, Abdusémetov also made a point of articulating that the Taranchis are also descendants of ancient Uyghurs:

Forty-five percent of people in Jungharia and Ghulja region are Taranchi (Uyghur). (n.d.; 62)

For us, descendants of Uyghurs, it is very important to know this. (n.d.; 116)

Apart from using the name “Uyghur” as a modern ethnonym and depicting significant aspects of the current social reality of the Uyghur nation, Abdusémetov also covered the topic of Uyghur history in his articles. He called the Qing mismanagement of Yettishahr in early nineteenth century, “Chinese oppression of Uyghur people” (*Uyghur khelqi üstidiki Khitay zulumi*; 25). Similarly, he portrayed the late nineteenth century uprisings in Xinjiang as a Uyghur undertaking and even called Yaqup Beg’s realm a “Uyghur khanate” (*Uyghur khanliqi*; 70–71, 76, 79, 148). Similarly, Turkic Muslims active in the Ili rebellion in 1911 were called “Uyghurs,” and native Turkic officials in 1910s were called “Uyghurs begs” (60). In these and other similar instances, Abdusémetov retroactively applied the modern ethnonym “Uyghur” to a community that, at

the time, used a different autonym and perhaps did not even consider itself a modern nation.

Abdusémetov's rich vocabulary used for labeling the south Xinjiang Turkic population and the unclear degree of "Uyghurness" in his perception of the Taranchis foreshadowed the vigorous discussion within Soviet Taranchi and Kashgari communities about the meaning of the ethnonym, as well as the negotiation of its meaning with Soviet authorities during the 1920s (researched previously by Brophy 2005, Kamalov 2006, and Roberts 2009). One of the main participants in the discussion was Abdulla Rozibakiev (1897–1938), an early Taranchi communist and activist, who perhaps first used the term "Uyghur" to name a revolutionary organization in Almaty in 1918 or 1919. Rozibakiev was allegedly strongly influenced by Abdusémetov (Kamalov 2006, 25). Another activist, Ismail Tairov, founded a "Uyghur association" (*Uyghur uyushmisi*) in Tashkent in 1920 for the purpose of fundraising in support of approximately two hundred students from Xinjiang. In 1921, a meeting of the Revolutionary Union of Altishahri-Jungharian Workers²⁵ took place in Tashkent where it was proposed that its name be changed to the Uyghur Revolutionary Union of Altishahri and Jungharian Workers, and shortly later to the Uyghur Revolutionary Union (*Uyghur Revsoyuz*). However, the term "Uyghur" in the body's title did not point to a homogenous ethnic composition of its members, among whom there were Taranchis, Kashgaris, Tungans, Han Chinese, Kyrgyz, Tatars, and one unspecified Turk. Rather, here the name "Uyghur" denoted a common origin of the members in Xinjiang (Brophy 2005, 173–74).

The ethnic content of the label "Uyghur" was not satisfactorily clarified for over a decade. On the pages of Uyghur language periodicals and publications published in Soviet Central Asia, such as *Voice of the Poor* (*Kembegheller Awazi*; issued 1921–32), *Salvation* (*Qutulush*; 1927–?), *Young Uyghur* (*Yash Uyghur*; 1922), *First Step* (*Birinchi Chamdam*, 1924), *Literature of Uyghur Country* (*Uyghur El Edebiyati*; 1925), and *Red Dawn* (*Qizil Tang*; 1931–32), Taranchi and Kashgari activists staged a turbulent debate about their ethnicity and national identity. One of the points of dispute was whether these two groups formed a single Uyghur nationality. In particular, vibrant argumentations occurred over the issue of linguistic differences (or similarities, depending on the point of view) between the Taranchis and Kashgaris. Furthermore, apart from disagreements within the Taranchi and Kashgari community, the third party to have a decisive say in the debate was the Soviet administration. For example, despite

25 The organization is elsewhere called the Organization of Workers and Peasants of Altishahr and Jungharia (*Altisheher-Junghar Ishchi Déhqanlar Teshkilati*; Millward and Tursun 2004, 73).

the fact that in 1922 the CPSU instituted a body called the “Provincial Bureau of Uyghur Communists in Yettisu” with Abdulla Rozibakiyev as its general secretary, which was a measure suggesting that the administration perceived the Taranchis and Kashgaris as a single nationality (Brophy 2005, 173–81), the census of 1926 listed Taranchis, Kashgaris, and Uyghurs as three separate ethnic groups (Matley 1967, 106). This was arguably because the Soviet authorities were not yet fully convinced that the Taranchis and Kashgaris could technically form one ethnic group. At the same time, the Soviets made clear that they would not support the idea of independent Uyghuristan across the border in Xinjiang (Roberts 2009, 372–73). The “Uyghur question” (Brophy 2005, 163) was solved only in 1935 when the Uyghurs were officially designated as an ethnic group. At a meeting in Almaty in 1936, the orthography and script of the standard Soviet Uyghur language, based on the Latin alphabet, was adopted and remained in use until 1947 (Kamalov 2006, 29–30). Discussions about Uyghur national identity were silenced by Stalin’s crackdown in the late 1930s on all issues smacking of “nationalist deviations,” which sent a number of Central Asian Uyghurs to the gulags, execution grounds, or fleeing to Xinjiang (Roberts 2009, 373–75).

David Brophy and Sean Roberts illustrated that delimitation of the Uyghur nationality in Soviet Central Asia was obviously neither a single-step nor a top-down move made by Soviet authorities, and the 1921 Tashkent conference did not mark the moment of emergence for a modern Uyghur nation. It was rather a complex process which spanned from the resuscitation of the ancient ethnonym “Uyghur” by nineteenth-century academicians through discussions about its contents within the Taranchi and Kashgari communities in the 1920s up to the official recognition of the Uyghurs by Soviet authorities in 1935. The process also comprised Soviet appropriation of the Jadidist reform initiative and the proactive creation of the national identities of Central Asian Muslims in the 1920s and 1930s. Last but not least, other important phenomenon acting in the project include Soviet propaganda efforts targeting Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, which contributed to the transfer of the concept of a Uyghur nation into Xinjiang.

Due to the universalistic nature of the communist movement, Soviet propaganda regarded Xinjiang Turkic Muslim working classes as a client group fit for liberation by the communist movement. These efforts also included theorizing about their ethnic identity and status within Xinjiang. The Soviets initially targeted workers from southern Xinjiang who came to work in Soviet Central Asian agriculture, mining, oil, cotton, and timber industries. The number of these migrant workers was approximately fifty-two thousand in

1913, while in the 1920s it was estimated at 10%–20% of the southern Xinjiang Turkic population, i.e., tens of thousands of people (Brophy 2005, 166; Ezizi 1997a, 151; for population estimates of Xinjiang at the time see Bellér-Hann 2008, 60–64). In Central Asia, the Xinjiang workers not only directly witnessed the wooing effects of Soviet indigenization, they were also subjected to direct communist propaganda. Some even became members of the CPSU and continued that organization's work in Xinjiang (Ezizi 1997a, 151). The first communist cell in Kashgar was allegedly established as early as 1917 (Khushtar 2000a, 227). Another Soviet-sponsored organization was the Xinjiang Liberation Organization (*Xinjiangni Qutuldurush Teshkilati*) established in Soviet Central Asia (Ezizi 1997a, 152). The Soviets also published periodicals in Xinjiang's Turkic language that specifically addressed the situation in Xinjiang, such as the *Liberation* (*Qutulush*) issued in Tashkent in the 1920s (Burhan 1986, 148).

Communist agents were also dispatched from the Soviet Union to carry out propaganda and organization activities in Xinjiang. For example, Tatars associated with modern schools in northern Xinjiang brought news of the Soviet revolution and the allegedly improved living conditions in Soviet Central Asia, clandestinely distributed Soviet press, and organized demonstrations (Ezizi 1997a, 149–50; Janishif 2001, 67–80). Throughout the 1920s, the main line of Soviet propaganda in Xinjiang gradually shifted from espousing national liberation to calls for establishing unity between the budding Xinjiang Muslim communist movement and that of the Hans and Huis in China proper. That way, a united communist front within the territorial scope of the entire ROC could be created. Early Xinjiang communists were thus urged to forge working relationships with Han communists being trained in Moscow. Not surprisingly, Yang Zengxin tenaciously opposed infiltration by socialist and communist activity (Ezizi 1997a, 152; Roberts 2009, 372–74; Burhan 1986, 182–83, 215). Although Soviet communist efforts in Xinjiang during the 1920s await further research, it is likely that the effect with which they motivated events in Xinjiang is at least comparable to the inspiration generated by the preceding Jadidist and Muslim reformist creed.

2.4 National Agitation by Xinjiang Turkic Intelligentsia

Xinjiang Turkic Muslim intellectuals and activists were undoubtedly influenced greatly by the above-outlined formative processes of Central Asian Muslims' national identities, including the concept of a Uyghur nation. Xinjiang Turkic enlighteners also started an agitation that directly aimed at awakening the

national consciousness of Musulman in Xinjiang. They also sought to uplift the cultural and social standing of their nation and to form grounds for its eventual political mobilization. The following sections illustrate such national agitation in poems of Abdukhalik Uyghur and Memtili Tewpiq, two activists/poets who were among the very first Xinjiang Turkic intellectuals to view the Musulman community through a national prism and to call on their nation to stand up for its national interest. The very fact that Abdukhalik and Memtili used poetry, traditionally a creative discipline of the very elite Central Asian Turko-Islamic milieu, to disseminate modern ideas among a growing readership, attests to the modernization of Xinjiang's intellectuals in the 1910s and 1920s.

Abdukhalik Uyghur

Abdukhalik Uyghur, by his own name Abdukhalik Abdurakhman Oghli, was born to an educated merchant family in Turfan probably in 1896 (Muhemmed'imin 1998, 375) or 1901 (*Abdukhalik Uyghur's Poems*—AUP 2000, 1; Ekhmidi 1996, 346). He acquired a classical education and mastered Arabic, Persian, and Chaghatay. Around 1916, he traveled with his grandfather to Semey in today's Kazakhstan where he learned Russian. After returning to Xinjiang, Abdukhalik studied at a modern Chinese school where he learned classical and modern Chinese; he chose a Chinese name Hā Wéncái (哈文才, in English “Abdukhalik—Literary Talent”). In 1923, Abdukhalik traveled with the aforementioned progressive entrepreneur Mekhsut Muhiti and other activists to the Soviet Union, where he stayed for three years. During this stay, he studied Russian and Tatar literature. His education in several languages and cultural environments, as well as exposure to modernist trends in Russia/Soviet Union, later greatly benefited Abdukhalik in his role as an educator who stirred his community to national consciousness and national movement.

In 1926, Abdukhalik returned to Turfan and became a publicly active figure. He cooperated with the Muhiti family and Heyder Sayrani in introducing modern education into the Turfan area. In some instances, Abdukhalik's house would be used as the teaching facility for Sayrani's classes. He also founded a well-supplied library that became one of the most influential sources of knowledge in eastern and northern Xinjiang. In 1927, he and several other local activists founded a philanthropic modernist organization called the Enlightenment Union (*Aqartish Birleshmisi*), which raised funds and used them to open modern schools around Turfan. Abdukhalik's plan to establish a printing shop and publish a newspaper in Turfan did not receive official approval and so probably never came to fruition. He attended a Sun Yat-sen's Three People's

Principles workshop held in Karashahr in 1928. Eventually, Abdukhaliq also participated in political and insurgent activities. After the Komul uprising in 1931, he successfully arranged for a Tatar mechanic to travel to Komul to teach the rebels how to operate and repair modern rifles. In November 1932, Abdukhaliq allegedly wrote the text of his poems "Awaken!" and "Open!" on cloth banners and brandished them while marching through the streets of Turfan in an antigovernment protest. In December 1932, an uprising broke out in Turfan, during which the insurgents seized the seat of the Turfan government. At the beginning of 1933, Abdukhaliq Uyghur and several of his associates were arrested and imprisoned. On March 13, 1933, the group was paraded in shackles through Turfan to the execution ground. Allegedly shouting the slogan "Long live the liberation!" in both Uyghur and Chinese, Abdukhaliq and his colleagues were executed (*AUP* 2000, 1–13; Muti'i 1990, 384–87; Ekhmidi 1996, 346–49; Muhemmed'imin 1998, 376).

Even though only about sixty of Abdukhaliq's poems have survived until today, his contribution to Uyghur literature is enormous. He was the first writer to remold classical literary tradition into modern Uyghur poetry. He wrote his poems in the vernacular, although he retained many noncolloquial words from Chaghatay, which were probably not used in spoken language at the time. Although he wrote many pieces in classical genres, such as the *aruz wezni* or *ruba'i* meter, he implanted many elements of popular culture, such as folk songs, sagas, fairy tales, or popular myths. At the same time, his works are strongly committed to relevant social issues and show deep concern over the fate of his people and homeland. He was the first Xinjiang Turkic Muslim author to reflect on contemporary social, political, and cultural issues and to implant features of modernity into poetry. His familiarity with current affairs and ideas in Russia/Soviet Union and China proper enabled him to disseminate ideas of Jadidism, the May Fourth movement, and the Three People's Principles in his works. As did his personal activities, Abdukhaliq's poetry had an enormous communal impact. A great number of his poems became popular by first circulating in oral form among people and were only eventually recorded in written form. Abdukhaliq is famed as the founder of modern Uyghur literature, and his work and ideas were similar in significance to figures such as the Tatar poet Abdulla Toqay (1886–1913), Uzbek writer and activist Mustafa Choqay (1890–1941), and Chinese writer and thinker Lu Xun (鲁迅, 1881–1936). Abdukhaliq's poetry is exemplified by the below translations. Notably, the first poem that follows is one of the most influential and beautiful works of modern Uyghur literature:

“Awaken!”

Hey awaken, miserable Uyghur, enough of your slumber,
 You own nothing! The next thing to lose would be your life.
 If you don't deliver yourself from the decline,
 Oh, your situation will be troublesome, so troublesome.

Rise! I said, raise your head! Awaken!
 Cut off your enemy's head, spill his blood!
 If you don't open your eyes and look around carefully,
 One day you will die helpless with your wishes.

Your body still looks as if lifeless,
 Is that why you are not worried much about your death?
 I shout and you keep lying still,
 Do you want to die asleep?

Open your eyes wide and look around you,
 And ponder long on your future.
 Should this precious chance slip out of your hands,
 Problems, only problems are there for you to come.

My heart worries about you, oh Uyghur,
 My fellow fighter, my brother, my family.
 I care about your situation; I call to wake you,
 But you still don't hear, what's wrong with you?

One day your regret will come,
 That day you will understand the point.
 You will curse, but it will be too late,
 Only then, Uyghur, will you give into my words. (1920; 8–9)

“We”

Because of our ignorance we suffer many hardships every day,
 Say, which one of us benefits from today's situation?

We keep lagging behind the current trends,
 We elect officials, and then we file allegations.

We are not devoted to knowledge and studiousness,
Thinking about study or teaching while chewing on pinesap.

Where there is no unity, difficult is the dispute over the benefits for the
motherland,
Wherever there is a celebration, we feel like joining and spending an
evening.

Even in a hundred years, we will not understand the common benefit,
When it comes to doing harm, amazingly dexterous we are.

Whenever someone does a good deed, he is not remembered,
Whenever we feel like it, we expose the bodily parts we should not expose.

For the nation we aren't able to donate a penny,
We don't think it's necessary, and keep on building our eaves.

Our aim is neither brotherhood nor comradeship,
And if we are originally friends, we will still pursue our own goals.

If a friend of ours accidentally happens to make a mistake,
Openly we find and point out ten more flaws.

We don't long for fame or for strength of our ancestors,
Illiterate and ignorant with blindfolded eyes we brag.

We devote our lives to useless and laudable favors,
But when it comes to collecting the *haji* tax, off we flee.

When we become infuriated at each other during games and jokes,
Reconciliation is nowhere to be seen and flames keep burning among us.

In flattery there is none above us,
Sly and tricky, we tell all kinds of lies.

There used to be a saying: "A dog remembers the one who beats it."
We feed all our dignitaries, officials and magistrates fat.

Those who are after knowledge are soaring in the sky and floating in the
stream,
We don't even have a mangy donkey, on foot we are walking.

When a car comes grunting, “Oh God, what is this?” we say,
Not using our brains, we are standing dumbfounded.

In technology and craftsmanship we say that ‘we’ve done enough,’ and
that is it for us,
We sit in our kilns and pour porridge in our clay bowls.

There is none to make the mountains and rivers a paradise on Earth,
We mold our pillows and lay care freely.

Instead of astronomers, engineers and scholars
We have greedy clergy and aristocracy.

When we want something, we pretend not to see or not to be able to
accomplish it,
We slander with thousands of names those who are determined and say,
“I’ll do it.”

We don’t care a bit about our homeland and land,
A day will come since when worries will be pointless.

“Shush now, Abdukhaliq, enough, don’t worry, stop grumbling,”
Then we will be remorseful because we made ourselves suffer. (1921; 13–15)

“Gog – Magog”

Manchus are down,
Ended up with empty hands.
The cruel became the rulers
Laughing from all around.

Military governors in every province,
Run the politics as they please.
Zhongshan’s²⁶ words
Were ignored.

Sanmin zhuyi was shut off,
Without real actions and effect.

26 Refers to Sun Yat-sen’s name Sun Zhongshan.

At the end China
Separated into twenty-two parts.

One of the parts
Was our motherland Xinjiang.
Its population was Uyghur,
But this notion did not exist.

We didn't notice anything,
From summer until winter,
Yang Zengxin became the Governor
And began to massacre.

There were judges and mallas,
Clad in ceremonious turbans and coats.
"To abide by his orders is a duty,"
Was their religious ruling.

Yang was very skilled
At various schemes
And at creating
All kinds of contentions.

This fact was good for Yang,
Exceptionally useful.
As if for a wolf that had seized a lamb
And began to devour it with its skin.

Seven-headed monster
Sat permanently in his post.
Stole gold and silver,
Built houses in Tianjin.²⁷

The homeland's fame was gone,
So was the gold and silver ore.

²⁷ This line refers to the fact that a majority of successful Chinese merchants operating in Xinjiang at the time hailed from Tianjin (天津) and came to the province following the Qing reconquest (Lattimore 1950, 51, 140).

Monsters multiplied,
In number day by day.

They stationed troops at Komul
And sealed shut the Xingxing Gorge.²⁸
“Should companions rise they’ll be afraid,
Hurry, this is simple.”

The army lay at Komul,
Wasting all the taxes.
Annoyed the people of Komul
Till they said “Enough!”

More soldiers—thieves
Came to Komul,
Finally became in charge
The murderer of Fan Yaonan.

Uyghur wrote songs,
Unveiling his hearts and souls.
In which the arrogant general,
Was compared to a monster. (1928; 40–43)

“I See”

The sun’s long risen
The whole world is lit,
But only our Xinjiang
I see as the blackest soot. (1930; 72)

“Untitled”

In what a state this nation,
Uyghurs’ grandsons, open your eyes
Use your strength and do a good thing.
Stand up! Stop all useless talk.

28 The Orangutan Gorge (猩猩峡 *Xīngxīng xiá*), located at the western end of the Hexi Corridor (河西走廊 *Héxī zǒuláng*) in Gansu Province, is the point of entry from China proper into Xinjiang.

By enduring unprecedented abuse,
 We reached today's state of affairs.
 Strangers come and run our affairs,
 Acting with cruelty towards these mountains. (n.d.; 90–91)

Abdukhalik's poems reveal his dedication to promoting modernity and progress. His vivid imagery depicting desolate sceneries of Xinjiang landscape or rough weather conditions point to the oppressive political reality of Xinjiang and to the difficult fate of Xinjiang Turkic Muslims. Similarly, Abdukhalik widely employed a theme of an abandoned lover, who weeps for his partners who had abandoned him/her. As one traveler's report from 1905 shows, such folk songs were quite common around Turfan at the time (Le Coq 1985, 69). In Persian literature and Sufi poetry, this theme was a metaphor for a believer's love of God. Abdukhalik used this device in a modernized way, when love for the departed articulates his people's desire for improvement of conditions, reform, progress, and development, as in poems "Shattered Heart" (6), "Longing" (10–12), or "Where Are You?" (23). The poem "Memorial of Hope" (63–64) compared the abandoned lover to a nightingale in cage.

Abdukhalik also espoused the principles of cultural enlightenment by frequently featuring metaphors of darkness (symbolizing Xinjiang Turkic Muslims' decline, illiteracy, and oppression) and light (meaning progress, modernity, and development). The poem "Lamp," for instance, uses the metaphor of light for knowledge that guides the poet on his path through the darkness of ignorance (80). Modern inventions and technology are regarded as the means to soar high in the sky and float in water ("We," 13–15). Abdukhalik also introduced Russian loanwords into poetry, such as *inzhéner* (engineer; 15), *poyiz* (train; 67), *parakhot* (steamboat; 67) and *aptomobil* (automobile; 88). Many pieces directly described Yang Zengxin's dysfunctional administration, openly called for a rebellion, or extolled revolutionary victories, such as "Anger and Lament" (34–35), "Untitled" (86), "Lamentation" (88–89), "Curses to You, Brutes!" (99), "Disillusioned" (106–8), and "Frost" (100–102). Even though the arduous path to progress and change was portrayed in metaphors portraying untamed nature, which often disturbed the author, Abdukhalik often expressed his hope that the situation in Xinjiang would eventually change, as in "Mountains in Sight Are Not Far" (69) and "Endless Hope" (36–37). The poem "Shouts before Death" contains Abdukhalik's hopes that the flowers of his efforts will bloom after his death (112).

Abdukhalik was most probably among the first of the Xinjiang Turkic Muslim intellectuals who perceived his community as a modern nation. Many of his poems feature the words "nation" (*millet*) or "people" (*khelq*) used in the

modern sense, for example, as in “Endless Hope” (36–37), “Hope” (67–68), and “Untitled” (90–91). This concept also appeared in works of acerbic admonition, where he reprimanded and mocked his nation for being “asleep” or “blind,” acquiescent and passive in their decline, as in “Soon to Come” (51–52; the “politics of admonition” was a Central Asian Jadidist approach identified by Khalid 1998, 114). The poem “To Molla Rozi” (65) denounced Xinjiang Turkic elites who collaborated with the Chinese administration, or in other words, did not represent the interests of their nation. These references in Abdukhaliq’s poems pointed to a persistence in the dynamics of discord, which were examined in the previous chapter.

Abdukhalik’s poems are also the first known record of an indigenous Xinjiang Turkic Muslim referring to the concept of a specifically Uyghur nation. It was probably during his contact with Turkic intellectuals from Russia in the 1910s when Abdukhaliq became acquainted with the idea and practice of calling the indigenous Turkic Muslim oasis dwellers of Xinjiang by the name “Uyghur.” The reuse of the term as a modern ethnonym made some progressive Xinjiang Turkic intellectuals realize that this construct could be used to awaken the national consciousness of their proto-national Musulman community. Abdukhaliq’s choice of this term as a penname (*tekhellus*) and inclusion of this idea into his poems were instances of such movement toward the Uyghur national consciousness of the Musulman. Besides the need for unification of action and to establish a common name for a nation, Abdukhaliq’s adoption of the term “Uyghur” as his penname also alluded to one interpretation of the name’s meaning as “cultured” and “civilized,” and it reflected the modernist embrace of knowledge and science as key to national well-being (Muti’i 1990, 379–82). At this moment, it is not clear precisely when Abdukhaliq started to use the term “Uyghur” in his works. Chronologically, the first poem to do so featured in the anthology is the “Uyghur Girl” (*Uyghur Qizi*; 1–2) written in 1917; however, it appears only in the title, the authenticity of which is, moreover, disputed in the anthology. Another early use of the term “Uyghur” by a native Xinjiang Turkic intellectual in the sense of a national name for the Musulman community is in the poem reproduced above, “Awaken!” written in 1920.²⁹

29 There are other instances of the early use of the term “Uyghur.” Abdukhaliq frequently used the term “Uyghur” in the last stanzas of his poems. However, in these cases the word referred to the author himself. This practice, typical for Persian poetry and originating probably in pre-Islamic times (Rypka 1963, 84), was designed to cause the audience listening to an orally recited poem to better remember the author’s name. It is also known that the aforementioned Tatar enlightener Heyder Sayrani, who was closely acquainted with Abdukhaliq and involved in many progressive activities in Turfan, Urumchi, and

In his poems, Abdukhaliq defined several traits of the Uyghur nation. One of the shared characteristics was the national decline and misery caused by the dysfunctional Chinese rule over Xinjiang indigenous Turkic Muslims in combination with their own passivity and indolence ("The Anguish of the Era," *AUP* 2000, 75–76). Abdukhaliq further pointed to the shared and distinct lineage of his nation by calling it "Uyghurs' descendants" (*Uyghur ewladi*; "Untitled," 90–91). He referred to ancient Uyghurs as to people of "fame" (*shöhret*) and "vigor" (*gheyret*; "We," 14) and also esteemed the ethnonym "Uyghur" itself: "Uyghur—our renowned and famous name in world history" (*jahan tarikhida meshhur atalghan namimiz Uyghur*; "Disillusioned," 106). Uyghurs were also said to be as distinct from the Han as "white from black, which will never become white / let pure gold separate from copper and let it withstand fire" ("Mountains in Sight Are Not Far," 69). The concept of "homeland" (*el, yurt, weten*) as a national trait also appears in Abdukhaliq's poems ("We," 15; "My Wish," 98; "Untitled," 87). Homeland was sometimes called by the term "mountains" (*taghlar*; "Untitled," 90–91), referring to tall the mountain ranges surrounding eastern and southern Xinjiang. In some places, the homeland was referred to by the Chinese loanword "Xinjiang" ("Gog – Magog," 40–43; "Untitled," 72).

Abdukhalıq was also among the first indigenous Xinjiang Turkic thinkers to ponder on Uyghur national interests. He specifically used concepts such as "common benefit" (*omumning paydisi*; "We," 13), "for the nation" (*millet üchün, millet demek*; "We," 13 and "Untitled," 87), "happy future of Uyghurs" (*Uyghurning iqbalı*; "The Anguish of the Age," 76), and "disappearance of the nation" (*millet yoqalmaq*; "Endless Hope," 37). However, Abdukhalıq did not primarily concentrate on propagandizing political national interest. His poems and activities reveal that the overwhelming force of his effort was aimed at the agitation of his fellow nationals from detrimental passivity to proactive pursuit of national interest; hence, his frequent use of metaphors describing awakening from sleep, opening one's eyes, looking around at the progress of the surrounding world, the urgency of realizing the needs of the age, and many others. The poem "Awaken!" is the best example of such poetics. Similar to the dictum of the Jadids in Russia, modern "knowledge and education" (*pen ma'arip*) are among the highest priorities for Abdukhalıq and serve as a "key to awakening" (*oyghinish achquchi*) "my Uyghur" (*Uyghurum*; "Greeting Letter," 49–50). Abdukhalıq asserted that under the oppressive Chinese heteronomy,

Chöchek, named his son "Uyghur" in 1919 and further propagandized the use of the term as a nation name for Xinjiang Musulman throughout the 1920s in the newspaper *Our Voice* (Sayrani 2000, 65).

his nation had to exert its own effort to uplift its status and regain national prestige. Abdukhaliq specifically regarded passivity as the chief cause of national misery (“Disillusioned,” 106–8). He also reflected on factionalism within the Muslim society by extolling the virtues of “unity” (*jem’iy bolush*), “brotherhood” (*ikhwan*), and “fellowship” (*buraderlik*) within the nation as important preconditions of national well-being (“We,” 14).

Even though Abdukhaliq’s poems and actions largely sought to promote cultural national values and economic mobilization, he also occasionally discussed and propagandized political aspects of national interests. Some of these were, for instance, “freedom” (*hürlik*) of the “homeland” (*weten*) to enable Uyghurs’ descendants to catch up on the progress of the surrounding world, to rid themselves of slavery just like European nations, to restore the connotations of “glory and honor” (*sherep-shan*) to the ancient name Uyghur used to have in the past or the “homeland’s fame” (*yurtning dangqi*; “We,” 13–15; “Gog – Magog,” 40–43; “Hoping,” 67–68; “Untitled,” 87; “Untitled,” 93). Abdukhaliq’s poems also show the influence of the Chinese republicanism and KMT ideology stemming from China proper—they contain passages referring somewhat loosely to Sun Yat-sen’s Three People’s Principles, that is, “democracy” (*khelqchil*), “law” (*hoquq*), and “livelihood” (*turmush*). In one piece, Abdukhaliq specifically referred to the Three People’s Principles as to a “star of hope” (*ümid yultuzi*) that unified the Uyghurs, Mongols, and Tungans (“Greeting Letter,” 49–50). Abdukhaliq declared his devotion to the struggle for ideals even at the price of life (“My Wish,” 98). His execution for participation in the revolution shows that those were not empty words. Abdukhaliq Uyghur’s life and work can be regarded as a case study of a progressive cultural activist who became involved in political agitation and politicized national movement to the point of sacrificing his life.³⁰

30 Although Abdukhaliq’s poems are widely read and officially published in Xinjiang today, he remains a controversial figure in modern Uyghur history. The stance of his life and work continues to carry a strong appeal for today’s national-minded Uyghurs. In 1981, several Uyghurs wrote the text of Abdukaliq’s poem “Awaken!” on the wall in Kashgar. The police then sought to find the author of the subversive poem, not realizing it had been written sixty years ago. Stanzas of this poem were also chanted by Uyghur protesters during demonstrations in Urumchi in 1989. Official representation of Abdukhaliq ranges from that of a patriotic figure to a dangerous nationalist (Rudelson 1997, 149–53). As in the case of Lu Xun, by posthumous glorification of Abdukhaliq as the founder of modern literature, the PRC authorities are striving to eliminate his antitotalitarian message: “Suppress those you can and stand the remaining ones on a pedestal. By lifting them up on a pedestal, you can rein even them” (Lu 1992, 273).

Memtili Tewpiq

Another Xinjiang Turkic intellectual active in national agitation was Memtili Tokhtaji Tewpiq,³¹ whose life and work show many similarities to those of Abdukhaliq Uyghur. He was born in 1901 in Boyamet village in Atush County in southwestern Xinjiang to a doctor who was also a progressive. He attended the Hebib Zade modernist school in Éksaq village, where he was a student of the Ottoman activist Ahmet Kemal. The cultured and well-educated milieu of the Kashgar-Atush area made Memtili realize the importance of new education and modern trends. In 1920, he accompanied his father on professional travels throughout northern Xinjiang and made a living as a barber.

During these travels, he was able to witness the poor material conditions of his people and homeland. At this time, he wrote a poem, "Studied and Surpassed," commemorating the assassination of Abduqadir Damolla (referenced below). Because of the critical tone of the poem, and because it immediately became widely popular among the people, Memtili was placed under government surveillance. Upon the advice of his friends, he left for the Soviet Union in 1921. There, he learned Russian and studied for a year and a half at a pedagogical institute in Moscow. After that, he left Moscow and made a living as a cook and *kebab* seller in the ports along the Black Sea coast, performing Xinjiang folksongs. He arrived in Istanbul around 1927 and took up the job of janitor at a pedagogical institute. He eavesdropped on classes and studied in his free time, and eventually, was allowed to take the entrance tests. He was accepted as a student and studied at the institute with a superb record. After graduation, he was a teacher at an elementary school on the outskirts of Istanbul. At the same time, he affiliated himself with a Turkish nationalist organization, Turkish Youth Union (*Türk Gençler Birliği*). In 1932, the news of the Turkic uprising in Xinjiang reached him, whereupon he promptly returned to Xinjiang and became involved in promoting, organizing, and fundraising for modern education in Atush and Kashgar. He also launched a two-month pedagogical course, which trained some sixty teachers. Within six months, some twenty-four modern schools were allegedly founded by Memtili and his associates, which in total educated several thousand students who then became the first of several successive generations of Xinjiang elites.

Memtili also gradually became closely involved in political activities. In 1935, he formed a so-called Scout Force (*Izchilar Etriti*) of some one hundred students. The group somewhat resembled an army unit—dressed in light green uniforms and carrying military-style bags—the Scouts marched under Memtili's leadership through the villages and towns around Kashgar and sung

31 "Tewpiq" is a penname meaning "one who chooses the right path" (MEP 2000, 11).

songs propagandizing modern education. The group enjoyed the support of Turfan enlightener Mahmud Muhiti, who, after the installation of a new government in Urumchi in 1934, wound up as a military commander of Turkic army forces in Kashgar.³² Muhiti sent military personnel to protect the Scouts' marches and modern education activities and also effectively lobbied on all levels of provincial administration in favor of new Turkic education. The spread of modern education in southern Xinjiang is to a large degree due to Muhiti's patronage.

Memtili's dedication to education and modernity was also similar to Abdukhalig's. On one occasion, Memtili allegedly declared:

In order to free the people of my motherland from the shackles of enslavement, I have chosen the noblest of professions—teaching. Maybe one day a lead bullet worth about six cents will send me off to the netherworld. But I am ready for such a day. Walking the path of the motherland and the path of knowledge, I will not waver a bit from spilling my hot blood. (Talip 1998, 126)

Memtili's nationalistic activism and involvement in affairs bordering on politics gradually came to be viewed unfavorably by the provincial authorities. In April 1937, he was arrested while teaching and imprisoned in Kashgar. In his cell, he allegedly continued to write nationalistic poetry on the walls. He was executed probably sometime later that year along with several relatives and other intellectuals (*MEP* 2000, 1–14; Ekhmidi 1996, 350–54; Ezizi 1997a, 396–420; Schleussel 2009, 388–89).

Although Memtili's poems are not as innovative and ground-breaking as Abdukhalig's from the point of view of literary theory, his message of nationalism had a strong social impact in the Kashgar area and contributed to the emergence of the southern Xinjiang Turkic Muslims' national consciousness. The tone of Memtili's poetry is well exemplified by several pieces, translated below:

“Decay”

Plague has come to Kashgar,
The irrigation ditches are without water,
Oppression covers everything like a cloak,

32 For more on the events leading to Jin Shuren's fall and the Turkic insurgency of the 1930s, see Chapter 3.

Faces are as yellow as wax.
To move freely around is impossible,
The fierce stench of decay is everywhere,
Craving for food overlaid the land,
No millet to eat is left.

Taxation and toil grew heavy,
Breaths and sighs are strangled in throats,
People's backs were scarred,
Do you see that, Tewpiq?

The mercy of God will come,
Faces will light up enthusiastically. (1920; 1)

“Studied and Surpassed”

The others have studied and surpassed us, oh brothers!
It looks as if their conscience was firing up their perseverance.

Other nations are fluttering like falcons in the air,
Think, disciples of Muhammad! We are lagging far behind!

Scholars who know the words of truth don't teach us,
Our cruel rulers are selling out virtues for lousy money.

Where there is religious teaching, to there they rush restlessly like light
grapes,
Turbans on their heads, rosaries in hands, they are shunning the truth.

Think! To whom go all the taxes and levies, who takes them?
Those who committed so many treacheries and hide in respectable
attires.

They gained some knowledge in other countries,
And God gave them their good reputation.

We read but don't understand Arabic which is difficult for us,
They have left us not a speck of knowledge.

Orphans lie in the ashes beneath the public baths in Kashgar,

Without education, they gamble and smoke hashish.

Late Abduqadir Damolla is gone unjustly.
His sin? He only taught the truth to us. (1920; 4)

“Sayram Lake”

Small you are, Sayram Lake, but your distress is immense,
Even if your waters surge, they still cannot overflow the banks,
Tall peaks surround you,
Even though you wish to, you cannot surpass these slopes. (1921; 5)

“We Are Uyghurs’ Children”

We are Uyghur children, our hearts are bright,
We’ve lived long lives and come along a noble path.

In many eras we found ourselves under domination of tyrants,
We shed rivers and rivers of blood on our way to freedom.

Now our motherland’s become a hell for us,
We became prisoners and captives, our situation is grave.

A century has passed in wars, our glory is immense,
That is why abuse and slavery don’t suit us. (1930; 12)

“Awaken, People!”

Awaken, people! It’s you, who will liberate the motherland,
By the means of schools light the lamps and fill it with brightness.

Let the era of oppression and cruelty be over now,
Be free from fatal destiny and dark times.

Be diligent and strive for your well-being,
And work towards enlightening children.

Stand up straight and start walking the path of work,
Let the Bird of Fortune perch over your descendants’ heads. (1934; 37)

“On the Path to Liberation”

For you, oh our homeland, we sacrifice our lives to you,
On the path to liberation, our blood has flowed like a river.

We shed blood and gave lives; finally we set you free,
There was faith in liberation in our hearts.

We cleaned the face of our homeland with blood,
Perhaps our name too was cleansed by blazing flames.

Our good deeds became companions to you,
Our forefathers were reputable for such merits.

Our fathers' wars will not disappear from pages of history,
Their brave pedigree will continue—we are their descendants.

The militarists collapsed, the country is in peace,
Live, long live our beautiful future prospects. (n.d.; 28)

“I Am Little”

I am little, my words are sweet,
I am a refined blossom, which is blooming.
Those who do not study are empty and useless,
Their vigor often goes out.

I am a little Uyghur son,
I am so good, so good.
As I go to school my face shines brightly,
Immorality is something distant to me. (n.d.; 20)

Memtili's poems articulate many of the same ideas discussed in Abdukhalik's poems. In poetics and symbology, Memtili's depictions of desolate natural scenes are metaphors for the suffering of his nation and motherland. The poem “Not Coming” contains a description of desolate southern Xinjiang in dry, snowless, and freezing winter, which symbolized the stuffy political climate (15). Memtili used similar metaphors elsewhere—the poem “Homesick,”

written presumably abroad, recalls Xinjiang as a land of eternal winter clad in haze (10–11), whereas “Telke Mountains” depicts a parched and forbidding mountain range around Atush (2). Other poems also use a rich vocabulary that portrays darkness and denunciations of oppressive government, negative national traits, and corrupt Turkic elites, such as in “Fragment” (6) or “Fragment” (8). Analogously, vocabulary that portrays light, as in “At Dawn” (17) or “Brothers” (23), expresses hope for a better future, symbolized by bright sun shining over the homeland and its oppressed people.

Many of Memtili’s poems convey his perception of his community as a “nation” (*millet*) or “a people” (*khelq*), defined mainly by a noble and famed ancient Uyghur ancestry, possession of a “homeland” (*yurt*, *el*, *ana diyar*, *ana yer*, *ana makan* or *weten*), and a communal interest of “well-being” (*sa’adet*; “Studied and Surpassed,” 4; “Homesick” 10–11; “We Are Uyghurs’ Children,” 12; “At Dawn,” 17; “For the Homeland,” 21–22; “Surpassed,” 27; “On the Path to Liberation,” 28; “Awaken People!” 37). The primary communal interest articulated by Memtili concerned a national awakening and action that eventually leads to the revival of freedom, to prestige and prosperity in the nation and its homeland, and thus, to a position equal with other modern nations. For Memtili, a radical way to forward such national revival was through action aimed at political goals. Many of his poems called for overthrowing the dysfunctional Chinese administration (“Not Coming,” 15; “Let Us Set Slavery on Fire,” 24) and even specifically advocated the use of force in the struggle for the freedom of the homeland (“Whose Son Are You?” 19). “Revolution” (*inqilab*) was seen as a shining flower (“At Dawn,” 17) or an erupting “volcano” (*wolqan*) melting the “chains of slavery” (*qulluq kishen-zenjiri*; “Cries,” 18). “Unification” (*birlishish*) in strength and action was to enable the nation to again become the master of its homeland (“Surpassed,” 27).

As a progressive teacher, Memtili frequently emphasized the role of modern education and knowledge, which he perceived as avenues to the freedom and prosperity of a nation (“Knowledge,” 9). He compared knowledge and progress to wings, which enabled developed nations to soar into the air (“Studied and Surpassed,” 20). Memtili also stressed the important function of a teacher in society—teachers and activists in education who established schools radiated the light of knowledge, whereas people without education were blind. Education was portrayed as a means to attain national well-being, while teachers were the flowers of the homeland, and Atush was the “source of schooling” (*érpan menbesi*; “We Teachers,” 38). Memtili saw a teacher’s job as a difficult one because promotion of modern knowledge was obstructed by conservative clergy (*molla*), saintly lineages (*ishan*), and native officials collaborating with the provincial administration (*begs*). Memtili related that teachers’ work was

sometimes despised, and the word “modernist, progressive” (*jedid*) was used as a curse. But for him, the meaningfulness of teaching gleamed as the truth in the darkness of oppression. Therefore, it is in the homeland’s interest for the teachers not to stray from the path of “modern knowledge” or “science” (*pen*; “For the Homeland,” 21–22). The poem “I Am Little,” translated above, is in fact a nursery rhyme, which illustrates how the concept of the modern Uyghur nation was being disseminated among children in Memtili’s classes.

The message of Memtili’s activities and poems, as well as his untimely arrest and execution, suggest that his impact on the social life of the Turkic Muslims of Kashgar was both influential and inflammatory.³³ But apart from the fact that Memtili Tewpiq was another enlightened activist willing to pave the way for his nation toward modernity and progress by sacrificing his own life, his ideas also reveal that throughout the 1920s at least some of Xinjiang’s Turkic Muslim new intelligentsia perceived their community as a modern nation defined by a shared descent from ancient Uyghurs, a national homeland, and a set of interests that eventually aimed at reviving national prestige.

2.5 Chapter Summary

Both Abdukhalik Uyghur and Memtili Tewpiq started their modernist activities during the 1910s and 1920s, which was roughly at a time when they could have personally met Molla Musa Sayrami, the representative of the classical Turko-Islamic literary tradition who passed in 1917. Yet their writings and mindsets were very different from those of Sayrami and signify a marked departure by Xinjiang Turkic elites from the imagery of the traditional religious realm to the language of the modern world of nations. Their nascent national ideas were able to build on previously existing notions of Musulman identity as a community defined by a shared religion, descent, origin, place of residence, mode of life, culture, political tradition, and other markers valid in late imperial era, which altogether defined the community as indigenous Turkic Muslim oasis-dwellers of southern and eastern Xinjiang. However, in the eyes of the progressive Xinjiang Turkic elites influenced by foreign models, the national criterion gained prominence over the religious one, thus, they increasingly

33 Similar to Abdukhalik’s poetry, Memtili’s timeless message retained relevancy for the future and inadvertently addressed the situation of the Uyghurs after 1949 very well. The location of Memtili’s remnants was kept secret by the authorities until 1986. After it became widely known, it immediately started to be frequented by Memtili’s admirers (Ekhmidi 1996, 354).

started to see their community as a “nation” (*millet*) with ultimately a political agenda. Sometimes, the community was envisioned as a nation of “descendants of Uyghurs” (*Uyghur ewladliri*) or “children of Uyghurs” (*Uyghur baliliri*), thus invoking images of a common ancient ethnonym, culture, and prestige. According to one interpretation, due to the Ottoman and Tatar Jadidist connections to certain pan-Turkist inclinations, Xinjiang Turkic Muslim elites perceived themselves as belonging to a transstate Turkic nation rather than to a nation of exclusively Xinjiang Turks (Millward 2005, 275–77). The shift into the national worldview is also demonstrated by the texts’ introduction of a vernacular and printing, which replaced the preceding manuscripts that were hand-written in Chaghatay as the primary means of written dissemination.

Based on the previous findings, it also seems that in the 1910s and 1920s Xinjiang Turkic elites began the process of creating a modern Uyghur national symbology and inventing national traditions. They articulated several defining features of their nation, some of which were either entirely nonexistent or not as important during the late imperial era. One of the identity markers that gained prominence was the concept of a “homeland” expressed in a variety of ways (e.g., by words *yurt*, *el*, *ana makan*, *ana yer*, *ana diyar*, *weten*, or by portrayals of the homeland’s natural environment), to which the nation was connected since time immemorial. Notably, these intellectuals did not refer to the homeland by a specific name. In fact, the name “Turkestan” or “East Turkestan,” that is, the homeland of speakers of the Eastern Turki language, was a term used during this period by the Swedish missionaries to denote southern and eastern Xinjiang (as illustrated, for instance, by the title of the *Turkestan Almanac* [*Teqwiyimi Türkistan*] for the year AH 1327 [Anno Hijra; Muslim calendar], which was the year AD 1909 [Anno Domini; Western calendar]; PFK 1908, 1; Figure 2.1 [Cover of the *Turkestan Almanac*, 1909]). It does not appear in Abdukhaliq’s or Memtili’s writings. Xinjiang Turkic intelligentsia occasionally even used the Chinese term “Xinjiang” to name their homeland. Often, the beloved homeland was depicted through natural landscapes, such as mountains or lakes. Portrayals of desolate Xinjiang landscape, harsh weather, and climatic conditions, as well as frequent references to darkness and night, were wielded by the authors to represent another new important national symbol—national misery caused by the oppressive Chinese administration and the exploitation of the Uyghur homeland. This way a common name, homeland, past glory, and current misery emerged as primordial attributes of the newly invented so-called traditions of the nascent Uyghur nation. Nezerghoja Abdusémetov, Abdukhaliq Uyghur, Memtili Tewpiq, and other late imperial and early Republican Xinjiang Turkic activists took the first steps in the genesis of modern Uyghur national symbology.

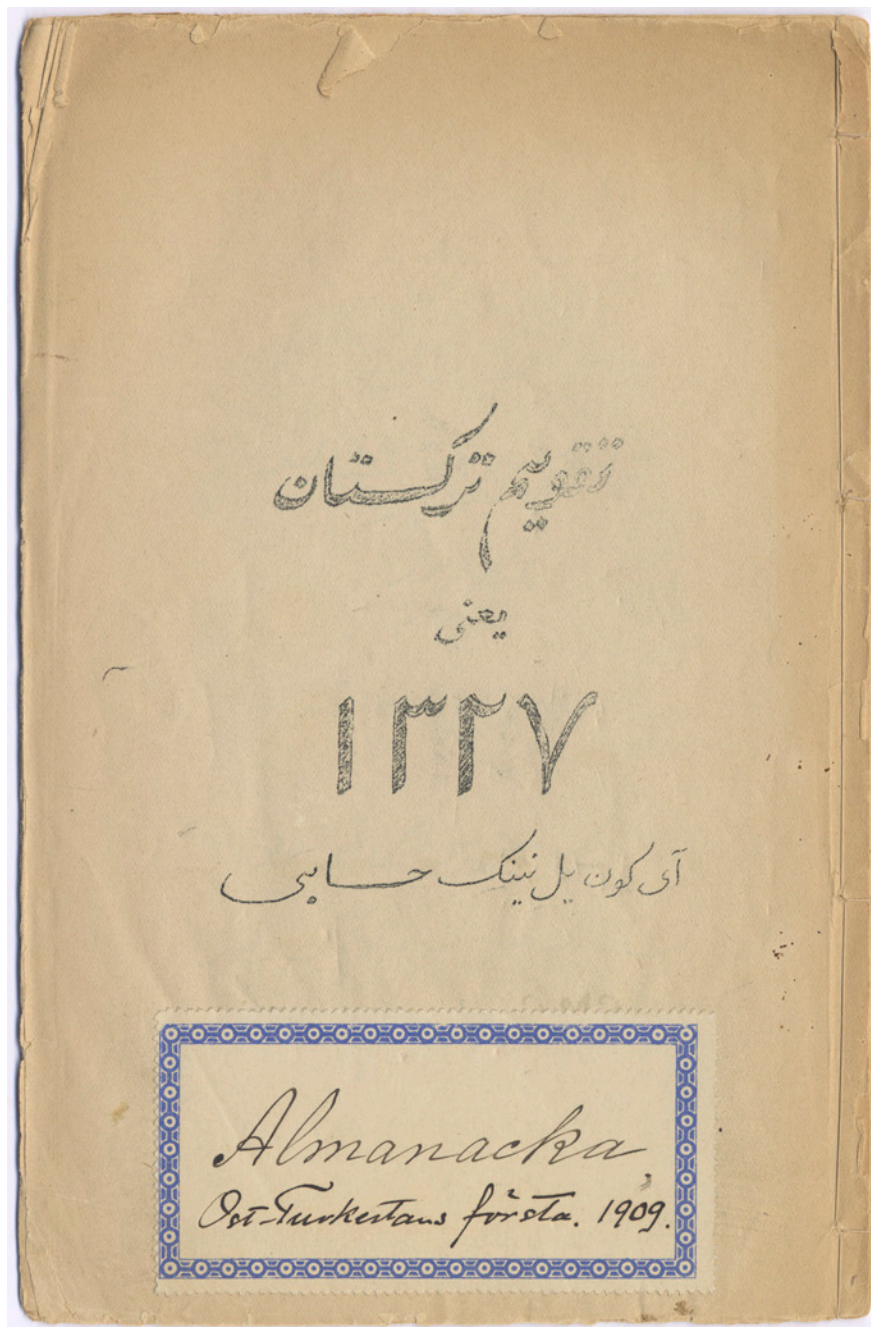


FIGURE 2.1 Cover of the Turkestan Almanac, 1909

Turkestan Almanac, i.e. the Calculation of the Months, Days, and Year of 1327
 (Teqwiymi Türkistan Ye'eni 1327 Ay Kün Yilning Hisabi; i.e. AD 1909; PFK 1908, 1).
 Permission for publication: Lund University Library.

The new Xinjiang Turkic intelligentsia's idea of national well-being thus gradually replaced religious virtue as the fundamental social value and primary communal interest. Early modern Uyghur enlighteners were the first indigenous intellectuals to clearly formulate communal interests in a national vocabulary. Xinjiang Turkic elites were not concerned with the physical survival of their community. Instead, their primary aim was to mobilize their fellow compatriots to strive for the rehabilitation of a national prestige within their heteronomously administered homeland. By criticizing negative national characteristics, such as passivity, disunity, and an inadequate drive for education and modernity, their *discourse of admonition* sought to awaken their nation from sleep and darkness and prompt it toward an enlightened effort at self-improvement. Modern education, technology, and information were the keywords of such progressive discourse. Importantly, the call to action advocated proactive self-improvement *by the nation itself*. This was due to the fact that the progressive initiative sharply collided with the interests of Chinese administration and conservative clergy. Therefore, the state and traditional society not only could not be counted on by the progressives for defending national interests, they were even severely obstructive of the modernization efforts.

The Xinjiang Turkic intelligentsia's modernization initiative was ultimately pointed toward restoring the status of a once advanced, but later declined, nation of Uyghur descendants. In other words, the enlighteners' goal was to effectively remold their nation from imperial subjects into citizens of a modern republic in which a representative government is formed, national interests are defended, and economic progress is realized. The rhetoric of Abdukhaliq Uyghur's and Memtili Tewpiq's writings nevertheless suggests that in the 1910s and 1920s, sovereignty and other political objectives might have been actually secondary to the cultural and social objectives of modern education, technical progress, and economic benefits. For the most part their actions and writings did not suggest that political objectives prevailed over other national interests, such as culture and welfare. Due to this low degree of politicization in the majority of their efforts, Abdukhaliq Uyghur, Memtili Tewpiq, and other early Xinjiang Turkic elites' modernist enterprise should perhaps not be called a nationalist movement, which regards political objectives as the highest priority. However, as the enlighteners' actions strived to endow their nation with the important characteristics of a nation (national name, motherland, symbology, education, and vernacular, among others), their agitation initiated a wave of action that should be termed a *national movement*. It was in the

following decade that this national agitation spilled into the political arena, and the national movement transform into a nationalist one.

Although it is again difficult to assess the extent to which Xinjiang Turkic elite notions of national identity and interest penetrated the rest of society during this period, it is reasonable to argue that such ideas were not shared by a significant portion of the southern and eastern Xinjiang general population. Several reports by foreign travelers in the region during the 1910s and 1920s do not contain any mention about the local Turkic population referring to themselves as Uyghurs or Uyghur descendants. On the contrary, there are numerous accounts of the people referring to themselves and/or being known as “Turkic” or by toponyms (Kemp 1914; Abdusémetov 1991; Cable and French 1927; Lattimore 1930; Roerich 1931; Stein 1992; Lattimore 1995; Schomberg 1996). The term “Uyghur” wielded by the Turkic enlighteners thus reflected an ideal mode of communal perception by a nationally conscious intelligentsia rather than an existing national practice. All of the above sources also describe contemporary Xinjiang as an underdeveloped region, lacking the means of mass communication and transportation infrastructure by which such ideas could be spread. Even if such means had technically existed, large-scale dissemination of ideology would have been difficult due to the restrictions of Yang Zengxin’s isolationist policy. Of the three aforementioned attributes of modernity (i.e., new schools, publishing houses, and social organizations), only the awareness of the need for schools penetrated to a certain extent Xinjiang Turkic society. However, as the following section of this research will illustrate, the nascent Xinjiang modernity and national agitation by Xinjiang Turkic enlighteners accelerated the dynamic of accord that promoted the formation of a modern Uyghur national consciousness and the emergence of a highly politicized national movement. Moreover, the nationally conscious Turkic elites, who were educated in new schools that started to appear after 1880, were to play a leading role in the cultural and political life of Xinjiang Turkic Muslims up until (and beyond) 1949.

Politicization of National Discourse (1930s)

This chapter explores the transformation of the early modern Xinjiang Turkic intelligentsia's national agitation during the 1910s and 1920s into a discourse of national interest anchored in political and nationalist terminology in 1930s. The shift was related to the rebellion that broke out in Komul in 1931 and eventually led to the brief establishment of the East Turkestan Republic in 1933–34 in Kashgar. The East Turkestani nationalist creed was dispersed through publications that contained a rich discourse on the national identity and interest of Xinjiang Turkic Muslims. This chapter first draws on research done on Turkic magazines published in Kashgar in 1933–34, namely the *Life of East Turkestan* (*Sherqiy Türkistan Hayati*), *Free Turkestan* (*Erkin Türkistan*), and *Independence* (*Istiqlal*). It also draws on the *History of East Turkestan* (*Sherqiy Türkistan Tarikhi*), the first modern history of the region, written by Muhemmed Imin Bughra, a very important figure in the early modern intellectual and political history of the Xinjiang Turks. Another source is an unpublished text, *Memoir of the Revolution* (*Inqilab Khatirisi*), written by Emin Wahidi, an eye witness to the Turkic insurgent and nationalist movement of the 1930s. This chapter further explores both the continuity and shift in the discourse of communal identity and interest after the defeat of the East Turkestani insurgency and the assumption of Xinjiang power by Sheng Shicai in 1934. The source for this section is the periodical, *New Life* (*Yéngi Hayat*), published in Kashgar from July 1934 to May 1937. This chapter also traces the rhetorical emergence of political national interests, such as nation-state, political autonomy, civil rights, national rule, and equality among members of a nation or modernity, and it also traces the process of the construction of East Turkestani national traditions and symbols.

3.1 Turkic Insurgency (1930–34)¹

Jin Shuren's administration caused a grave deterioration of relations between the provincial administration and the native Turkic Muslims during the 1920s and 1930s. The situation was especially tense in Komul (in Chinese Hami 哈密), a strategically important location at Xinjiang's gate to China proper

1 Contents of this section were published as an article in *Central Asian Survey* on November 3, 2014, under the title "Nationalism and Modernism in the East Turkestan Republic, 1933–34." Available online at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2014.976947>.

where a semiautonomous khanate was ruled by an autochthonous Turkic aristocrat. After Komul's Khan Maqsud died in 1930, Jin Shuren abolished the khanate's autonomy and permitted waves of Han refugees from the neighboring Gansu province to settle in the municipality. He also imposed direct taxes on local Turkic Muslims and expropriated their land (or compensated them with inferior land) to accommodate the Gansu newcomers. Moreover, the Han settlers were exempt from taxation for two years, while one year's tax amount was levied retroactively for local Muslims. Jin also ignored any Muslim popular discontent, which further increased due to the misconduct of a local Han official. As in the case of the Muslim rebellion of 1864–78, economic disparity and communal conflict between indigenous Turkic and exogenous Han populations (as well as the Han ruling strata), in which both sides were distinct in regards to religion, language, culture, and other identity markers, quickly bred a large-scale native Turkic insurgency. The spark of rebellion was struck in the village of Shopul in early April 1931, when local Han administrators, their bodyguards, and some Gansu Han immigrant families were massacred by local Turkic Muslims. The rebels then fled to nearby mountains, and Khoja Niyaz Haji (1889–1937) and Yolwas (1888–1971) became leaders of the uprising.

Pressed by provincial troops, the rebels were assisted by the troops of a young and ambitious Gansu Tungan warlord Ma Zhongying (馬仲英; 1910–unknown). As a result, the rebels held out, and in 1931 and 1932, the uprising gradually spread throughout the whole Yettishahr region. In the Turfan area, a large portion of insurgent activities were carried out by a secret organization led by Mahmud Muhiti (1887–1944), the brother of the Jadidist activist Mekhsut, who was himself killed in the warfare. Later, Tungans and Kazaks in northern Xinjiang also rebelled. In the winter of 1932, some rebel troops were preparing an attack on Urumchi. One of the two most powerful factions in the city were the White Russians, who made up a small but influential minority after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution and were paradoxically supported by the Soviets by the 1930s. Another major power in the capital was the Chinese troops, originally based in northeastern China, who arrived in Xinjiang via Siberia after the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931. This well-trained Chinese force was commanded by Sheng Shicai (1895–1970), an able graduate of military academies in China and Japan, who was charged by Jin Shuren with suppressing the Turkic rebellion in eastern Xinjiang. However, Jin was deposed in a coup staged by White Russians on April 12, 1933, and eventually Sheng Shicai took over Jin's position. At the same time, he pleaded for Soviet help against Ma Zhongying's Tungan troops, who were pressing Urumchi from both the east and north. The Soviet military intervention in early 1934 cemented Sheng Shicai's position as the ruler of Xinjiang (Forbes 1986, 52–62, 97–106).

Meanwhile, the situation in southern Xinjiang was complex. Important events occurred simultaneously along the southern and northern edges of the Taklamakan. A set of uprisings erupted in the spring of 1933 in the Khotan area, which was eventually brought under the leadership of the three Bughra brothers: Muhemmed Imin (1901–65), Abdulla (?–1934), and Nur Ahmadjan (?–1934). The Bughras were a clan of Muslim notables with hereditary political power; hence, they are referred to in some sources as the Khotan *emirs*. They established themselves as leaders of the Khotanese rebellion and even proclaimed an independent government in Khotan in March 1933. After that, Khotanese forces advanced westwards, where they allied with simultaneously erupting local uprisings and took control of Yarkend and Yéngissar. At the same time, other Tungan and Turkic troops from Komul and Turfan advanced from the Urumchi region westward along the northern road around the Taklamakan and, jointly with rebelling Kyrgyz forces, arrived in Kashgar where the two uprisings merged. Fighting ensued among various Tungan and Turkic factions, while Khoja Niyaz Haji, who had stayed behind his forces at the northern section of the Taklamakan, formed an anti-Tungan alliance with provincial forces. By May 1933, the events ended up in a stalemate—the Kashgar New City was in the hands of well-armed and trained Tungan troops of Ma Zhongying, whereas Turkic forces held Kashgar Old City. Moreover, the Khotan, Aksu, and Kucha regions were administered by separate Turkic factions. As a result, the whole eastern and southern areas of Xinjiang slipped out of Han Chinese control (Forbes 1986, 38–121; Millward 2007, 192–98; Burhan 1986, 278–82; Ezizi 1997a, 292–97).

Kashgar Old City thus became the center of native Turkic insurgency, in which the Khotan faction probably started to play a prominent role. Abdulla Bughra and Sabit Abdulbaqi Damolla (1883–1934), the Prime Minister and the supreme religious authority (*shaykh ul-Islam*) of the Khotanese government, arrived in Kashgar in July 1933 and founded the Kashgar Affairs Office of the Khotan Government (*Khotan Idarisi*), which subsequently transformed into the East Turkestan Independence Association (ETIA, *Sherqiy Türkistan Istiqlal Jem'iiti*; Millward 2007, 198). Finally, the insurgency culminated in the proclamation of the East Turkestan Republic (ETIR, *Sherqiy Türkistan Jumhuriyiti*)²

2 It is worth stressing that both independent states declared by Xinjiang indigenous Turkic Muslims prior to 1949 are in primary historical sources consistently termed by the same official name—East Turkestan Republic (*Sherqiy Türkistan Jumhuriyiti*). In order to distinguish between these two authorities, the acronym ETIR (East Turkestan Islamic Republic) is used in this study for the first state, which existed 1933–34 and was centered in Kashgar, while the acronym ETR is used to refer to the second, which existed 1944–49, was centered in Ghulja,

on November 12, 1933 (AH *rajab* 24, 1352), a move allegedly initiated mainly by Sabit Damolla (I, 12; Bughra 1998, 426).

All currently available scholarship on the ETIR agrees that the new republic struggled in virtually all fields of its existence. The administration failed to extend its influence beyond the oases located along the southwestern rim of the Taklamakan or even to take control of the nearby Kashgar New City, where Tungan armies continued to hold out. The ETIR's economy was plagued by a lack of resources and high inflation. In international relations, despite its manifest anti-Chinese and anti-Soviet orientation, the ETIR failed to enlist even rhetorical support from Great Britain or Turkey, both of whom recognized the ROC's sovereignty over Xinjiang. The promised support of Afghanistan also did not materialize (Millward 2007, 206; Forbes 1986, 112–16). The ETIR thus survived for several weeks only before it was overrun by the Tungs in early February 1934. The state's failure is one basis for the dismissal of the ETIR by PRC scholarship. The movement is interpreted by PRC scholars as an originally legitimate peasant uprising that turned into a “separatist regime” (分裂政权 *fēnliè zhèngquán*), soiled by narrow nationalism, pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism, religious extremism, and foreign imperialists' intrigue (Chen and Chen 1999, 277–85; Li 2003, 172–91; Ezizi 1997a, 216–20; Burhan 1986, 492–503, 605). The proclamation of an independent East Turkestani state—which carried an enormous symbolic significance for later East Turkestani and Uyghur nationalism and dissent—the ETIR, and all pre-1949 Uyghur nationalism is generally considered a *thema non grata* in the PRC. Republican China's official view is well illustrated by Zhang Dajun, who describes the insurgency as “turmoil” or “chaos” (變亂 *biànlùn*) or “coup” (事變 *shìbiàn*; Zhang 1980, 2727–812).

Andrew Forbes interpreted the ETIR as a state committed to the application of Islamic law with an apparent preparedness to adapt or reform Islamic custom to fit contemporary political and social conditions. According to him,

and is researched in greater detail in Chapter 4. The acronym ETIR was adopted in this study merely for practical purposes and draws on the term “Islamic government” (*hökümet Islamiye*; I 54, 59; NL 3), which occasionally appears in primary sources and reflects the greater degree of importance that the state attached to religion than did the ETR's authorities. However, it is worth reemphasizing that the official and widely used official name of the ETIR as it appears in all primary sources is the East Turkestan Republic. In other words, names such as the Turkish Islamic Republic of East Turkestan (TIRET; Forbes 1986, 112;), East Turkestan Islamic Republic (*Sherqiyi Türkistan Islam Jumhuriyiti*, 东突厥斯坦伊斯兰共和国 *Dōng Tūjuésītān yīsīlán gònghéguó*; Burhan 1986, 430; Chen and Chen 1999, 277), or even East Turkestan Independent Republic (*Sherqiyi Türkistan Istiqlaliyet Jumhuriyiti*; Ezizi 1997a, 298), which are used in much of the currently available literature, do not appear in any of the primary sources examined in this study.

besides being based on Islamic law, the ETIR also sought to institute educational, economic, and social reforms. Regarding foreign affairs, Forbes opined that the state was anti-Soviet, anti-Han, anti-Tungan, and had, in contrast to its spiritual predecessor (i.e., Yaqup Beg's state), considerably smaller success in lobbying for the support of great powers and Islamic countries. In Forbes' view, by adopting "an uncompromisingly" Turkic-Islamic stance, the ETIR successfully alienated all the major players in the region (i.e., the provincial government, the central government, the Tungans, and the Soviets) and was, therefore, "doomed from the moment of its inception" (Forbes 1986, 116). Laura Newby asserted that the republic was shaped by the two forces of ultranationalism and Islamism. Despite the fact that the administration apparently intended to modernize schools, the state was plagued by a lack of competent leadership, an absence of binding ideology, persisting tribal loyalties, and social fragmentation. According to Newby, in founding the ETIR, Islam was employed, nonetheless, for the first time in Xinjiang as a modern mobilizing force endowed with a view to creating the basis of a national identity of the East Turkestanis (Newby 1986, 74, 78, 84, 187–96, 220–23). Shinmen Yasushi's research also supports the intellectual interpretation of nationalism (mentioned in Chapter 2) and shows how the nationalist insurgency of the 1930s stemmed from Turkic cultural modernism of the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries:

The proclamation of the Eastern Turkistan Republic should be considered as the direct result of nationalistic movements carried on under the leadership of those intellectuals and merchants who had devoted themselves to reformist activities with the promotion of the New-Method educational system as its central axis. (Shinmen 2001, 154–55)

The founding of the ETIR is regarded by Shinmen as a remarkable consequence of social modernization in East Turkestan brought about by the transfer of ideas from west to east in Central Asia (*ibid.*). Similarly, although not directly concerned with the ETIR, Eden Naby's article pointed to the connection between the emergence of Turkic national identity and the mushrooming of Turkic periodicals in southern Xinjiang in the 1930s (1987).

What follows shows the considerable impact that the Turkic insurgency and proclamation of the ETIR exerted on the Xinjiang Turkic intelligentsia's perceptions of communal identity and interest. Sources of research for this chapter are primarily periodicals focused on the secessionist faction in Kashgar that were published by activists during the brief Turkic autonomy of eastern and southern Xinjiang in 1933–34. The periodicals were printed by the Swedish

Mission Press, established probably in 1905 by Swedish missionaries who were active in Kashgar, Yéngissar, and Yarkend beginning in 1892. After the missionaries were expelled from the province in 1938, they luckily managed to transport their archives to Sweden, where the collection is today kept in the Lund University Library. Chronologically, the first source under research is the *Life of East Turkestan* (*Sherqiy Türkistan Hayati*; *LET*; Figure 3.1 [The first page of the *Life of East Turkestan* no. 3]), a two-page press organ of the Kashgar insurgent government which started publication on July 21, 1933, after Sabit Damolla's and Abdulla Bughra's arrival in Kashgar Old City. Proclamation of the ETIR on November 12, 1933, was reflected in this weekly's name change; the next issue came out on November 15 as *Free Turkestan* (*Erkin Türkistan*; *FT*). Despite the periodical's change in title, its numbering, editorial staff, and the contents did not change; it is nevertheless regarded as two separate sources in this chapter. Its last issue was published on February 1, 1934, shortly before the ETIR leadership fled Kashgar Old City on the eve of imminent Tungan takeover on February 5 (Forbes 1986, 122). Throughout the whole period of its existence, the editor-in-chief of this periodical was Qutluq Haji Shewqi, a prominent modernist intellectual of Kashgar (whose activities were already mentioned in Chapter 2). Although as a rule, the articles in *Life of East Turkestan* and *Free Turkestan* are not signed, it is reasonable to assume that a large number of them were written directly by Qutluq or very similar-minded activists with Jadidist backgrounds.

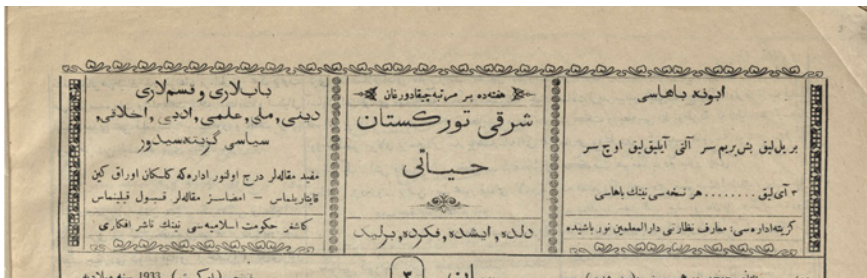


FIGURE 3.1 *The first page of the Life of East Turkestan no. 3*
 Published on August 3, 1933, the third issue was the very first one to state that the periodical was the 'publishing organ of the Kashgar Islamic government' (Kashgar hökümet İslamiyesining nashr efkari). The mast features the Jadidist slogan "Unity in Mind, Action, and Thought" (Dilde, ishde, fikirde, birlik; PFK 1933, 3). Permission for publication: Lund University Library.

Another major source examined in this chapter is the biweekly journal *Independence* (*Istiqlal*; 1), published for the first time by the ETIA in the month of *Ramadan*, 1352 (AD December 19, 1933–January 16, 1934). The first issue of *Independence* consisted of volumes 1 and 2 and totaled 74 pages. *Independence*'s value lies mainly in the fact that it contains a proclamation of the ETIR's basic legal principles, or Constitution. The *Independence* currently seems to be preserved in a single copy in the Lund University Library, which suggests that the double issue is the only time the journal came out. The editor-in-chief of the *Independence* was a certain Sufizade,³ and the periodical declared on the cover that it served as the ETIA's official press organ. The *Independence* carries somewhat stronger religious overtones than the other two magazines, including citations from the Qur'an or Arabic loanwords, while *Life of East Turkestan* and *Free Turkestan* feature a more secular perspective in a more vernacularized form.

This chapter also draws on the *History of East Turkestan* (*Sherqiy Türkistan Tarikhi*; 1998), penned by the aforementioned Muhemmed Imin Bughra (sometimes abridged as Mehmet Emin or Memtimin Bughra) who was undoubtedly one of the most important personages of modern Uyghur history. He was born in 1901 to a Khotanese religious aristocratic family and received a traditional religious education in Khotan and nearby Qaraqash, where he afterwards became a teacher and principal in 1922–33. During this time, he also became an advocate of modern education. After the Komul rebellion of 1931, Bughra organized an uprising in Qaraqash and gradually became one of the leading figures of the rebellion in the Khotan area, and later, of the whole Turkic insurgency in southern Xinjiang. After the collapse of the movement, he managed to escape from Khotan to Leh and Srinagar, eventually ending up in the Xinjiang Turkic refugee community in Afghanistan. There, he functioned as a revered leader until 1943, when he left for India and then for China (Benson 1991, 90; Forbes 1986, 124).⁴ Bughra finished his *History of East Turkestan* in Kabul in 1940. Since then, this text has been republished several times by Uyghur exile organizations.⁵ It is the first modern history of the region, and moreover, it was

3 In a memoir of a prominent Uyghur politician, Sufizade is said to be a member of a group of anti-Bolshevik and anti-Soviet rebels called the Qasimovists, who had fled Soviet Central Asia around the time of the proclamation of the ETIR (Ezizi 1997a, 305). It is questionable whether a refugee would be able to rise within such a short time to the influential post of editor-in-chief of ETIR's major propaganda organ.

4 Muhemmed Imin Bughra's later activities are examined in Chapter 4.

5 Known editions were published in 1941 (Kashmir; publication completed in 1947), 1970 (Kashmir; not complete edition), 1987 (Ankara), 1991 (Almaty; in Cyrillic script), and 1998 (Ankara; in modern Uyghur script). This research refers to the 1998 Ankara edition.

written by a highly educated individual who was also a direct protagonist of key events and political decisions made at the highest level. Bughra was the first Uyghur historian to integrate classical Turko-Islamic historiographic tradition with findings of modern archeology, ethnology, epigraphy, linguistics, and other fields (Tursun 2008, 89). This also means that, in contrast to Molla Musa Sayrami's works, Bughra's narrative is the first general history of the region to distinguish between the historical and the mythical past of the region and its people. At the same time, the nationalistic overtones of the *History of East Turkestan* make it a text highly acclaimed by many Uyghur historians, intellectuals, and also ordinary Uyghurs who had a chance to read it. The book has been aptly called "a foundational text for Uyghur independence activists" (Bovingdon 2010, 138). It is also a text continuously vilified and strictly banned in the PRC. But at the same time, *History of East Turkestan* exists in Chinese translation in the form of internally published material,⁶ and a number of Chinese historians are very familiar with it. Zhang Dajun also refers to Bughra's work, which he interestingly refers to as the *Modern History of Xinjiang* (新疆近代史 *Xīnjiāng jīndài shǐ*; 1980, 281). Muhemmed Imin Bughra's *History of East Turkestan* is indeed a cornerstone of the modern Uyghur intellectual canon. In this research, it is not examined in close detail due to the fact that the book was written several years after the insurgency, and also due to the fact that there are differences between the book's respective editions (as pointed out recently by Thum 2012, 298).

This chapter also refers to an unpublished text written by Emin Wahidi in Lahore under the name *Memoir of the Revolution* (*Inqilab Khatirisi*), dated December 24, 1938. Wahidi was an eye-witness to the insurgency in southwestern Xinjiang and, similarly to many other Xinjiang Turkic families, he fled via the Karakoram to northern India in the aftermath of the collapse of the ETIR in 1934. The memoir is mentioned in the 1998 edition of Bughra's *History of East Turkestan*, which describes Wahidi as Mahmud Muhiti's close comrade and advisor, reprints several of its pages and claims that its original manuscript version is kept in Bughra's personal archives (Bughra 1998, 391, 446, 480). Emin Wahidi and Muhemmed Imin Bughra, both being highly cultured members of the Xinjiang Turkic refugee community in Kabul, were probably personally acquainted and perhaps even closely collaborated with each other. A PRC-published memoir also refers to one Emin Wahidi, who was dispatched by Muhiti to report on Sheng Shicai's policy to the central government in Nanking

6 Internally published material (内部发行资料 *nèibù fāxíng zīliào*) includes publications commissioned by the CPC that examine politically sensitive topics and are therefore intended only for use by Party officials. In theory, these publications should not be legally accessible to non-Party academics or the reading public.

in 1936. Due to the worsening situation in southern Xinjiang, on his return from this failed mission Emin allegedly remained in Lanzhou, which traditionally had a sizeable Xinjiang Turkic expatriate community (Ezizi 1997a, 461–62). It is possible that Wahidi could have travelled from the Xinjiang Turkic expatriate community in Lanzhou to join the main body of the diaspora in India. Wahidi's memoir briefly summarizes the main events and context of the Turkic insurgency and includes the author's commentary on the events as well as his views of nation and nationalism. It is a remarkably personal insight into the thoughts and feelings of a Xinjiang Turkic Muslim who opted for exile during the 1930s after his homeland lost its brief freedom. At the same time, similarly to Bughra's *History of East Turkestan*, it is an *ex post facto* account written several years after the actual events have taken place, and this study, unfortunately, does not draw on its original version.⁷ Finally, this chapter also refers to several isolated original documents either held in the Lund University Library or published in other literature that deals with the 1930s Xinjiang Turkic insurgency, including rebel documents previously referred to by Newby (1986).

Discourse of the East Turkestan Nation

Similar to Molla Musa Sayrami's portrayal of the Musulman category examined in Chapter 1, the 1930s Turkic insurgent activists considered religion one of the main defining communal markers of indigenous Turkic oasis dwellers of eastern and southern Xinjiang. Religion was specifically considered a pillar of happiness in human life (1, 53). Accordingly, the insurgent administration strongly professed its religious piety. The Constitution of the ETIR was drawn up in the name of God, the top figure of its apparatus bore the traditional religious-administrative title Commander of the Faithful (Ar. *amir al-mu'minin*; 1, 23), and its legislature was based on the Islamic law (Ar. *shari'a*): "As the state is based on the superior fundamentals of Islamic law, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Justice is instituted. The Minister of Justice will act as the Supreme Religious Authority" (Ar. *shaykh ul-Islam*; 1, 28). Khoja Niyaz Haji became the head of state and was frequently referred to as "holy warrior" (Ar. *ghazi*). The Qur'an was considered the primary vehicle of knowledge, while noncompliance with religious principles was to be severely punished. The ETIR itself was the goal of the "path to the independence of the Islamic state" (*dölet Islamiyening istiqlal yoli*; 1, 4, 5, 17, 21–23, 28, 53, 55). The insurgency itself is also often referred to as the holy war of Islamic warriors and true Muslims against the infidels (LET 3; Newby 1986, 240–41; Wahidi 1938, 6, 7). The state was also

7 Emin Wahidi's memoir was edited and transcribed into contemporary Uyghur script in May 2002 by Abdujelil Turan of the Taklamakan Uyghur Publishing House (*Teklimakan Uyghur Neshriyati*) in Istanbul. I am thankful to him for supplying me with the edited version.

intended to unite other “Muslim brethren” (*Musulman qérindashliri*; *LET* 3, 19; *I*, 4): “Ninety out of a hundred people living in the region of East Turkestan are we, Muslims. We are of the same religious faction” (*FT* 15). Issues of the *Life of East Turkestan* from before the declaration of the ETIR also reveal that an “Islamic government” (*hökümet Islamiye*) was the insurgents’ goal from at least the summer of 1933 (*LET* 3). Similarly, after the Khotan insurgency declared independence in March 1933, the territory between Cherchen in the east and Yarkend in the west fell under the administration of the “Islamic Government of Khotan” (*Khoten hökümiti Islamiye*; Wahidi 1938, 14). Abidance by religious rules was perceived as a reason for the development of other Islamic countries, about which the insurgent press frequently brought news (*LET* 2; *FT* 14).

In other aspects, however, the discourse of communal identity in the 1930s was quite different from Molla Musa Sayrami’s dictum and revealed the impact the national idea and other features of modernity exerted on the thinking of Xinjiang Turkic intellectuals. In particular, the community was newly, and most importantly, perceived as a *nation* bound by a number of features. The following passage is illustrative of the shift:

Our East Turkestani nation (*Sherqiy Türkistan milliti*) is a world-known Turkic nation (*Türk millet*) of noble descent and pedigree. In the old times, just like other Turkic nations, we have pursued a nomadic livelihood in tents, raising herds of sheep and horses in the Altay Mountains and pastures of Moghulistan. We have been a noble nation governed by our own khans and leaders of the homeland. Several centuries from the *hijra*, our mighty khan Oghuz with all Turkic nations saddled horses and conquered all China, also subduing East and West Turkestan, Iran, and India. We are the children of Oghuz Khan’s soldiers who settled in East Turkestan at that time. The state assembled by Oghuz Khan stretched from the Chinese sea in the east to Qipchaq villages in the west. (*LET* 4)

The term “nation” (*millet*, *qewm*) or “national” (*milliy*, *qewmiy*) is used very frequently in the texts in a wide variety of contexts. The nation had a distinct ethnonym, “Turki” or “Turkic” (*Türk*), or “East Turkestani” (*Sherqiy Türkistanlik*; *I*, 60; Wahidi 1938, 1, 2, 7, 13, 21; Bughra 1998, 296). The nation also possessed a clearly defined “homeland” (*weten*), called “East Turkestan” (*Sherqiy Türkistan*; *I*, 57; *LET* 9) or “Great East Turkestan” (*Sherqiy ulugh Türkistan*; *I*, 60): “As regards our lineage and kinship, we are all descendants of the same Turks. Our language is the same Turkic. Our common homeland is East Turkestan, inhabited by Turkic tribes” (*FT* 15). This common ancestry was also shared by other Turkic communities, such as the Kyrgyz (Wahidi 1938, 8, 19), who were also generally included in the category of East Turkestani in the sources. Analogously,

the population of southern and northern Xinjiang was sometimes referred to as “Turk” (*Türk*; Bughra 1998, 304–5). The periodical *Life of East Turkestan*, which started publication in July 1933 as a “religious, national, educational, literary, ethical, and political newspaper” (*LET* 2), changed to *Free Turkestan*, a “national, political, educational, ethical, and literary newspaper” after the proclamation of the ETIR in mid-November 1933 (*FT* 13). The Turkic term for God (*Tengri*) was sometimes preferred to Arabic (*Alla*) or Persian (*Khoda*) terms (*I*, 3, 4, 66), which points to an emphasis on the Turkic aspect of identity, as opposed to the Arabic or Persian influence. The lack of national feeling was specifically criticized as a negative trait of some East Turkestanis (Bughra 1998, 367–68). It is also clear that the ETIR activists were aware of a distinctly Uyghur identity. The *Independence* used the word *yighiliq*, which is footnoted as a “Uyghur word” (*Uyghurche söz*) meaning “uprising, struggle” (*I*, 41). On the early edition of the ETIR coins, the state was referred to as the “Republic of Uyghuristan” (*Uyghuristan Jumhuriyiti*; Zhu 1991, 153, 225). It is possible that these two examples are among the earliest instances of the ETIR’s official use of the term “Uyghur” in the sense of a modern national name.

In the ETIR’s official discourse, the *national* segment of the local Turkic Muslims’ identity had at least the same importance as the above-discussed *religious* segment. In many instances, the words “religious” and “national” were used next to one another throughout the text. For example, the Constitution of the ETIR declared that the state’s administration was both a “religious and national Islamic government” (*diniy milliy Islam hökümiti*; *I*, 22) and a “religious and national rule” (*diniy we milliy hakimiyet*; *I*, 57–58), which came about as a result of a “religious and national revolution” (*ibadiy milliy inqilab*; *I*, 61) and intended to administer the “nation’s religious, national, social, and economic affairs” (*milletning diniy, milliy, medeniy we iktisadiy ishlari*; *I*, 23). According to a proverb featured in another text, “The success [of the new state] is granted by God as long as the nation contributes proactively” (*FT* 14). The East Turkestanian nation was called the “child of Islamic Turks” (*Islam Türk balisi*; *I*, 60–61). A “Turko-Islamic spirit” (*Türk Islam rohi*) was a concept specific to East Turkestanian history (Bughra 1998, 315). In another place, the establishment of Islamic government was hailed as much as the national awakening (*FT* 13). The “Islamic nation” (*millet Islamiye*; *LET* 2), the “path of religion and nation” (*din we millet yoli*; *I*, 11) and the “religious and national virtue and honor” (*dinniye we milliy nomus we izzet*; *I*, 45) were other frequently used concepts. Dates in *Life of East Turkestan*, *Free Turkestan*, and *Independence* articles, which were declared to be both religious and national journals, were stated according to the Muslim calendar (*hijiriye*), but also according to the Western calendar (*miladiye*). Khoja Niyaz Haji and Mahmud Muhiti were referred to by both their honorary religious and modern political/military titles: “Excellency

President Holy Warrior Khoja Niyaz Haji" (*janab re'is jumhur ghazi Niyaz Hajim*; FT 16) and "Commander Holy Warrior Mahmud" (*qomandan Mahmud ghazi*; FT 14). The banknotes of the ETIR were called "national Islamic notes" (*milliy Islam akchesi*; I, 64). In the *Life of East Turkestan* and *Free Turkestan*, the concept of nation was referred to more frequently than that of religion, and so in these sources, the religious lens was replaced by the national one as the basis of worldview.

Another prominent pattern in the dynamics of accord was the image of a shared *homeland* (i.e., East Turkestan), which in the national discourse became an important national treasure. The terminology in use included "homeland" (*weten*; LET 1; Wahidi 1938, 20), "place of origin" (*yurt*; LET 1; I, 31), "our homeland of East Turkestan" (*wetenimiz Türkistan Sherqiy*; LET 1, LET 3), "our great and holy homeland of East Turkestan" (*ulugh we muqeddes yurtimiz Sherqiy Türkistan*; LET 3), and "great homeland" (*ulugh weten*; Bughra 1998, xiii). By referring to East Turkestan as the homeland of the East Turkestanis, the term "Turkestan," which had been employed in the past by Mahmud Kashgari in the eleventh century and later used by modern western Turkologists, had been revived for modern use by Xinjiang Turks and also featured the modern idea of a nation as a legitimate *owner* of its homeland. East Turkestan started to be seen as a primordial geographical entity that had been the home to Eastern Turks since time immemorial, or in other words, the East Turkestanian nation. In contrast to other names, such as Xinjiang or Chinese Turkestan, the name East Turkestan was also seen as a term devoid of ephemeral political connotations, and thus, the only historically and scientifically correct name unbound by the "chain of politics" (*siyaset zenjiri*; Bughra 1998, xiv).

According to the sources, the national homeland belonged exclusively to East Turkestanis who had the right to rule it by themselves. East Turkestanis were perceived as a member of the "family of Turkic peoples" (*Türk qewm a'ilisi*) or a "Turkic race" (*Türk erqi*), and East Turkestan was portrayed as a "homeland of Turks" (*Türk ana yurti*; Bughra 1998, xiv). The term "East Turkestanian" mostly referred to the indigenous settled Muslim Turkic population of Xinjiang, or the Musulman, but occasionally, it also specifically included other Turkic indigenous groups (in southern Xinjiang, it was mainly the Kyrgyz; I, 57–58; Wahidi 1938, 7, 8). In turn, origins in the same homeland generated a sense of horizontal solidarity and fraternity that was necessary for the existence of a national consciousness; the members of the nation were often referred to as "brothers" (*burader*; FT 13), "persons from the same place" (*yurtdash*; I, 3, 9, 55, 63), or "persons from the same homeland" (*wetendash*; I, 3, 60). The president of the ETIR was explicitly declared responsible for the welfare of the religion, nation, and homeland (I, 25). Another important aspect was that only local East Turkestanis were able and entitled to rule in East Turkestan:

From that day, the people of Komul were fed up with Ma Zhongying. They realized that it was only the descendants of the homeland who could save it and defend it against enemies. They understood the meaning of our ancestors' wise words, "A stranger stays with you as long as you feed him, a relative until you die." (Wahidi 1938, 5)

The Turkic theoreticians saw one of their highest duties as protecting their homeland from enemies and foreign elements. These were primarily the Han people (*Khitay*, *Chin*, *Chinlik*; *LET* 1; *I*, 59; Wahidi 1938, 1, 22), as well as the administration of China (*Chin*, *Khitay*, *Khitaystan*; *I*, 54, 60), which the insurgency had targeted: "Until that day, our people clearly wanted to advance Islam and get rid of the Chinese" (Wahidi 1938, 11). The other significant adversary was the Soviet Union, whose ideology was incompatible with that of the insurgency and was, therefore, viewed by the insurgency with great suspicion (*I*, 59; Wahidi 1938, 10). Another enemy of the Turkic insurgents included the Xinjiang Mongols, who occasionally sided with provincial authorities (*I*, 59). However, by far the most formidable and despised foes were the Gansu Tungan troops, who, after initially being supportive of the insurgency, remained loyal to the central government of China and seriously challenged the Turkic troops from Kashgar New City (*FT* 13, 16, 18; *I*, 46). Tungsans were even regularly referred to in the sources as "Chinese" (*Chinlik*; Bughra 1998, 304). Even though Tungsans were also Muslims, East Turkestanis did not hide their bitterness about what they considered a betrayal of the Islamic cause and regarded the Tungsans in much the same way as the Chinese. This fact again testifies to the demise of the traditional religion-based world view and its replacement by the national idea:

At the time, it was possible to attain the goal of Islamic government by the people of Turkestan only by expelling foreign elements. The fact that the Chinese were there, and also that the Tungsans were there, was in conflict with reaching our goals. The Tungsans were not any different from the Chinese, besides the fact that they declared they were Muslim. (Wahidi 1938, 11)

Altogether, the emergence of the national idea in the Turkic elite perceptions of communal identity during the 1930s is perhaps best illustrated by the below passionate declaration:

Black Tungsans are worse enemies of ours than the Chinese. We are safe from oppression by the Chinese, but we are not at all safe from oppression by Tungsans. There is now no danger for us from the Chinese, but it cannot be said that we are not troubled by Tungsans. Therefore, we will

carefully prepare ourselves for the Tungans, and we will fiercely fight them on the battlefield and from now on, and there will not be the slightest sign of mercy in the hearts of East Turkestanis for the Tungans. This is what East Turkestanis learned from their rich experience on the battlefields. Yellow Chinese have nothing to claim in East Turkestan, and in the same way, black “Tungan” Chinese do not have anything worth even one *dachen*⁸ to claim in East Turkestan. East Turkestan belongs to East Turkestanis—this is our slogan. From now on, East Turkestan does not need any foreigners to act as our parents. Be it yellow Chinese or black Chinese, wherever they came from let them go back there, and let them take their rulers, dignitaries, magistrates, officials, administrators, and the like back to the interior. We need neither them nor their language. Let their ways, customs, manners, and writing get lost altogether. We have now expelled them forever. Enough of yellow and black bastards soiling our homeland for so many years! A handful or half-handful of yellow and black dirty slobs remain here. As if in an opium hallucination—they are hoping to retain the government like before, and, trying their best since they have nothing to lose, they want to continue the aforementioned cruelties. Their days are coming to an end. Soon, these dirty newcomers, who just somehow happened to end up here, will be sent off to their homelands, regardless of whether they want to or not. From now on, the oppressors who do not recognize the state authority of East Turkestan will be given no rights! Let the yellow and black beasts get lost! Long live the state of East Turkestan and let the political, religious, national, scientific, social, and economic revolution spread! Long live our great leader, President Khoja Niyaz Haji! Long live East Turkestani devoted fighters and heroic soldiers! (I, 47–48)

Construction of National Symbolology

Another prominent national symbol emerging in the discourse of the insurgent activists during the 1930s was the East Turkestani national history. The territory of the ETIR (i.e., eastern and southern Xinjiang) started to be perceived as the primordial “East Turkestan,” which has been inhabited by Turks since the dawn of history:

8 A *dachen* (from Chinese colloquial expression 大錢 *dàqián*) denoted a larger copper coin equal to 10 *wen* (文) in Xinjiang red copper cash. It was the second lowest denomination of Republican monetary system, and given the sarcastic tone of the text, as well as its very complex and ingenious wording, the use of a Chinese loanword in this particular context was most likely intentional.

East Turkestan has a bloody history of two thousand years. (1, 50)

Historical books of the Chinese often speak of us Turks as of occupants and raiders and accuse us of troubling their homeland so that the famous Chinese Wall had to be built for their protection. In contrast, some of us speak of the fact that we have been ruled by the Chinese for two thousand years and speculate that things will also be like this in the future. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Beijing, the long time capital of the Chinese, was founded by us Turks. (Wahidi 1938, 1)

[New scientific methods] proved that the Turkestani nation (*Türkistan milliti*) is the most ancient and civilized nation in the world. Works written after painful exploration and research by European travelers and archaeologists revealed to the world that the Turkic nation (*Türk milliti*) living in Turkestan land (*Türkistan éli*) has continuously existed for more than ten thousand years and that it is an ancient nation with a surprisingly advanced civilization and glorious history. (Bughra 1998, xiii)

Muhemmed Imin Bughra even argued there was a close correlation between the oppression of the nation and the absence of a national historiography:

The great homeland of Turks, located in central Asia, is called western and eastern Turkestan in today's terminology. This homeland of Turks is, in every aspect, an enormously significant region. Since ancient times at the beginning of the historical period, this place has been the place and homeland of Turks. Prior to all other places, this place spread mankind and civilization throughout the world. Turks, who lived here in ancient and middle ages, wrote thousands of pages about their history and accomplishments. Regrettably, in later centuries East Turkestan's people (*khelqi*) were exploited under the oppression of opinion (*pikir asariti*). In this period, all affairs of our nation (*millitimiz*) were subject to ulterior interests. Our historiography also came across frightening treachery and our historical works, preserved from ancient times, disappeared. They were replaced by subversive fabricated falsehoods and superstitions. Although there were great scholars and famous writers excelling in Turkestan in this period, they had to succumb to contemporary ways and to the influence of the political environment around them. For this reason, they did not see their own national history (*milliy tarikh*) as important and instead wrote many books about other subjects. (Bughra 1998, xii)

In his efforts to establish the East Turkestani nation as a primordial and highly cultured nation, Bughra further claimed that because so far no history of East

Turkestan has ever been published, some people might think that the place is some kind of a mysterious “country” (*memliket*) and not consider East Turkestanis a nation equal to other nations. National history has also been greatly distorted and misinterpreted by claims, such as that East Turkestanis have never before established an “independent state” (*musteqil dölet*), that they have always been dominated by other nations, and that they were an underdeveloped and backward people. Nevertheless, for Bughra, such politically motivated efforts at concealing a nation’s history are as futile as attempts to cover the sun during the daytime (Bughra 1998, xiii).

Historiography was indeed perceived by nationalist activists as a patriotic enterprise, to present their “dear nation’s” (*eziz millet*) history, their several thousand-year “heroism” (*ezimet*) and “greatness” (*ulughwarliq*; Bughra 1998, xiii). Indeed, to write the national history was seen as a duty:

Through these lines, we hope to tell our people who they are and who their enemies are. (Wahidi 1938, 3)

The reason for writing the memoir is to remember the names of those who sacrificed their life for the fatherland, which is a duty of our graceful people. . . . It is the duty and debt of each Turkestani to write down the history of past uprisings, to record in chapters the past sacrifices, to draw attention to and learn from revolutionary process, and especially to make sure that our future uprisings are not like this. (Wahidi 1938, 21)

The writings of the Turkic insurgent activists during the 1930s also devoted an enormous amount of energy to portrayals of flawed policy and oppression by previous Chinese/Han administrations. According to this line of argumentation, East Turkestanis suffered some fifty-eight years of hardship, during which they could not sufficiently develop (*I*, 22, 50; *LET* 1, 9). The situation did not improve even after the founding of the ROC in 1912. Governors Yang and Jin deprived the East Turkestanis of all rights, political representation, and means of appeal. They enforced sinification policies and kept the whole region in a darkness of ignorance, which they exploited for their own benefit. The local population was treated as animals and even called by animal names, such as *shengkou* (from Chinese 牲口 *shēngkǒu*, meaning “livestock, cattle”) and *chantou* (from Chinese 纏頭 *Chántóu*, meaning “Rag-Head”). The oppression that occurred during the Republican era was portrayed as more brutal than during any other time of history (*LET* 9, 12; *FT* 17, 19; *I*, 62; Wahidi 1938, 1–4; Bughra 1998, 292, 358–59). According to the sources, Xinjiang Turks especially resented the government’s obstruction of cultural development and education because it aimed at inhibiting the rise of “national feeling” (*milliy tuyghu*; Wahidi 1938, 2). As a result, East Turkestanis lagged behind the world in every aspect (*FT* 17)

and, during what was called in one text a “period of captivity” (*tutqunluq dewri*; 1, 42), suffered miserably under “the tyrants’ cruel claws” (*zalimlarning istibdatliq tirnaqliri*; *FT* 19):

In all previous periods, the East Turkestani nation (*Sherqiy Türkistan milliti*) was one of great reputation and grandeur. We were a nation that possessed national independence (*milliy istiqlal*) and national honor (*qewmiy izzet*). Then at some point, we became plagued by the disaster of disunity and personal motives and by discord and difference of opinion. Since then, we experienced the occupation and authoritarianism of foreign nations (*chet millet*), and our homeland and nation has been trodden into humiliation and abjection. The national chastity (*milliy nomus*) and well-being of the homeland (*weten sa’aditi*) have slipped from our hands. All this disunity came about because everyone started to pursue his own motives and neglected and became oblivious to the overall purpose of the homeland and nation (*yurt we milletning omumiyy meqset we menpeeti*). Also, we did not pay attention to and learn from our history, and we forgot our national independence and grandeur. This was the reason for our subjugation, appalling destruction, and devastation, which has no parallel in the world. (*LET* 4)

Since AH 1293,⁹ when the Chinese again subjugated East Turkestan, they treated the local people cruelly, humiliated and oppressed them. They insulted them by names such as *Chantou* and *Shengkou*. These are Chinese words, *chantou* meaning “wrapped head” and *shengkou* meaning “cattle.” Because the Chinese considered themselves idols and masters, and considered others slaves and serfs, they forced all those wanting to appeal to government authorities to stoop down and bow to them.

The Chinese found joy and excitement in committing decadence and licentiousness towards the lives, property, chastity, dignity, and land of local people. They have deprived the miserable local people of all of their rights; nobody could utter a single sound of praise or criticism about injustice. Whenever someone was discovered to have committed even the slightest misconduct, he was immediately sent to prison. The prisoners were confined with huge wooden boards and massive shackles around their necks, hands, and feet, beaten with clubs into unconsciousness and sentenced to life imprisonment or to banishment afterwards. The prisons were old, dirty, and hazardous to health, resembling stables for cows. The Chinese have not done anything for prosperity of the homeland (*weten*)

9 This year points to AD 1875/6, (i.e. roughly the time of the Qing reconquest of Xinjiang).

and nation (*millet*), for education and culture, nor for commerce and production. All Chinese and Tungan officials specialized and excelled in fraud and corruption, and those in law-enforcement uniforms competed in taking bribes. They forcefully extorted gold, silver, gems, and other national riches. They monopolized business matters as well as internal and external trade.

They strained local merchants for their own profit and absolutely did not consider local production. They have seriously obstructed national education and publishing; they have given grand freedom to prostitution and immoral debauchery. On the one hand, they implemented the policy of sinicization, giving the fertile and fruitful land of Turkestan to Chinese immigrants and making it very easy for Chinese immigrants to settle here. They have imposed excessive taxes and levies on locals, so that people (*khelq*) left their land and abodes behind and fled. The land and houses of those unable to pay heavy taxes were confiscated, and they were sentenced to banishment or life imprisonment. They have forcibly taken away wives and daughters of Turkestanis (*Turkestanî*). In Turkestan, the Chinese have not done one *dachen* worth of anything humane. They have verbatim adopted the kind of russifying policies of Russians in West Turkestan. Actually, the Chinese have brought really greedy beggars to East Turkestan, because such Chinese are only concerned with their personal interest, making money and getting rich. There was no humanity of conduct. The Chinese have no laws, everyone behaves as he wishes. All the officials of government authorities engaged in smoking opium. This was a major activity for Chinese officials; whenever you looked, you could see them lying stretched out smoking opium. There was not the smallest sign of justice and equity in Chinese courts. Whoever gave a bigger bribe, even if he was a heavy criminal, the verdict was beneficial for him. The poor who were not able to pay a bribe, even if the law was on their side, they were hung by their bound feet and beaten with clubs and finally sentenced to life imprisonment or banishment. In reality, money was the religion, belief, ideal, and merit. Eventually, the Chinese have invented new ways of making money. They started to apply Bolshevik policies and infringed upon the property, lives, chastity, and dignity of the nation. Upon this, a revolutionary movement sprang up to oppose these cruelties. (I, 42–45)

During the Turkic insurgency, the period of subjugation to the Chinese was counted at roughly fifty-eight or sixty years from the moment of the collapse of Yaqup Beg's administration and the Qing reconquest of Yettishahr (1878) to the Komul uprising (1931) or the proclamation of the ETIR (1933; I, 3).

The khoja-Yaqup Beg's insurgency was sometimes perceived as a period of religious and national freedom by East Turkestan theoreticians. Interestingly, such perception is not quite in accordance with Molla Musa Sayrami's account (examined above) of the khojas' and Yaqup Beg's exploitation of their Musulman brothers in faith, of the local and social factionalism, and of the Xinjiang Muslims' dislike for the Andijanians. Instead, these references to the anti-Qing uprising reveal how East Turkestanian theoreticians recast past events and their interpretations, which were firmly anchored in the premodern religious worldview, in their modern national dictum. However, in another context the Yaqup Beg's governance was viewed as a totalitarian power detrimental to the national struggle of East Turkestanis (Bughra 1998, 324–25, 341–45). A passage from Sayrami's *Tarikhi Eminiyi*, which relates the Qing oppression of Yettishahr, was directly quoted in the *Independence* (42) to illustrate the suffering of the East Turkestanian nation. This was despite the fact that Sayrami did not once use the word "East Turkestan" nor did he think in categories of a nation in his texts. This nationalization of the otherwise very impartial and objective work of Molla Musa Sayrami is a good example of nation work done by Turkic activists in the 1930s, which remolded existing cultural relics into new national symbology.

In further narrative of the nationalist thinkers, the ineffective Chinese heteronomy, perceived as an "injustice done to the whole nation" (*pütün millet naheqliq*; *LET* 9), understandably resulted in an alarming degree of national decline that set the stage for the righteous uprising of Xinjiang Turkic Muslims. Despite the fact that the individual local revolts throughout Xinjiang in the 1930s were, in fact, mostly sparked by economic causes, propagandists of the Turkic insurgency promptly framed the whole rebellion in national terminology, such as "national revolution" (*milliy inqilab*; *FT* 13; Bughra 1998, 289, 383), "national revolutionary movement" (*milliy inqilabiy hériket*; *I*, 41), "national liberation revolution" (*milliy azadliq inqilabi*; *I* 63), "struggle for independence" (*musteqilliq kürishi*; Wahidi 1938, 2), struggle for "national independence" (*milliy musteqilliq*; Wahidi 1938, 16) and "national movement" (*milliy hériket*; Wahidi 1938, 22). Similarly, all uprisings that had taken place in East Turkestan since the Qing dynasty were termed a "national revolution" aiming at "independence" by the insurgent discourse. This interpretation was also applied to the 1930s insurgency:

East Turkestanis had no means to let the government authorities know about the various kinds of oppression by the cruel monsters dominating them. No one dared to appeal, and the grievances of the people did not reach high officials. And even when the grievances reached them, they

remained unheeded as an unwelcome guest or brought bad consequences for those who voiced them. Local people were obliged to withstand plundering by the Chinese and their infringements on the chastity and dignity of wives and daughters. When the local people could not any more tolerate it, an armed uprising burst out against the cruel Chinese, seeking to protect religious and national (*diniy we milliyy*) virtue and honor (*nomus we izzet*). (I, 45)

In the insurgent texts, the state symbols of the ETIR were constructed in a similar way to the national history. All the periodicals devoted large amounts of space to the description of activities during the proclamation of the ETIR. In an unprecedented way, and undoubtedly emulating foreign models, the ETIR leadership successfully instituted the practice of making contemporary political events a seemingly public affair, or what has been termed “political theater” (Millward 2007, 204). Several sources relate the public aspect of the festivities, which were arranged with the intention to strengthen people’s horizontal fraternity and national togetherness by demonstrating that the ETIR was truly a *res publica*: the proclamation of the founding of the ETIR was read out publicly at a meeting of several thousand people on one of Kashgar’s squares on Sunday, November 12, 1933. The newly adopted sky-blue flag with white star and crescent that was chosen for the ETIR, which is in several places called “ancient” and “national” (FT 13; I, 14; PFK 1933, 9), was then officially raised, and other ETIR flags were also brandished throughout the place. The song, “Our flag is a blue flag, our domain is a Golden Horde, Turkestan is a homeland of Turks, of Turks inevitably” was sung. Forty-one ceremonial shots were fired, and military commanders and high officials held speeches. After that, the figures sung marching songs while the crowd paraded through the city (I, 12–16, FT 13). Another important step in the construction of a national symbology was the swift introduction of national coins and banknotes inscribed with “East Turkestan Republic” (Zhu 1991, 152–53, 224–25).

There were many other instances of construction of a national symbology. Close attention was paid by insurgent propagandists to events and figures associated with the struggle for national freedom. The ETIR was, thus, reportedly established

under the shadow of blood shed in the struggle of tens and tens of thousands of people who rose due to disputes within the Chinese, Kalmyk, Russian, and Turkic nations’ united opposition against the manifold state institutions. (I, 59)

The insurgent leaders were highly revered and glorified. For instance, it is reasonable to argue that Khoja Niyaz Haji was named head of the ETIR for life due to courteous reverence for him as the initiator of a national revolution rather than due to his actual merit, because at the moment when the relatively minor skirmish broke out in Komul, he could have in no way foreseen or aimed at the creation of an independent nation-state. Similarly, an obituary for the “enthusiastic nationalist” Haji Jirjis Ependi emphasized his struggle for the “national freedom of East Turkestan” (*Sherqiy Türkistan milliy azadliqi*; *FT* 18). Nameless, ordinary participants in the insurgency were glorified (Wahidi 1938, 7, 17, 19) as “those who raise the flag of Turkestan independence” (Wahidi 1938, 23). The duration of the uprising was also often mentioned (*I*, 58). While the Bughra brothers were the first to declare independence in Khotan, the ETIR established its capital in Kashgar, by far the most important of the cities of Yettishahr. A lengthy article calling for the meticulous preservation of ritual and physical cleanliness of the Eid Kah Great Mosque in Kashgar (*FT* 16) illustrates the emergence of another national symbol—an ancient place of worship with ancient religious legitimacy transformed into the cultic center of the religion of a modern nation-state: nationalism.

Similarly, in sources written after the collapse of the ETIR, the failure of the insurgency was recast into a symbol of renewed national tragedy. It was referred to as a moment when “national independence” (*milliy istiqlal*) was overrun, and its “sacred flag” (*muqeddes bayraq*) was torn down. The subsequent administration of Sheng Shicai was regarded as disgraceful and unbearable for Turkic blood and conscience, mainly because it relied on the support of the atheist Soviet Bolshevik regime. The day of April 12, 1933, when Sheng came to power and which was subsequently instituted as an official holiday, was mourned as a day of national tragedy by Turkic nationalists (Wahidi 1938, 10, 18–20). Another policy of Sheng that the exiled nationalists sharply criticized was his official division of Xinjiang’s Turkic population into respective nationalities. The insurgent theorists saw this measure as a scheme to implant artificial animosity into the Turkic nation, which had been living peacefully as “one kin” (*bir tuqqan*) and “one nation” (*bir millet*) in Turkestan since ancient times, and to enslave it in the way the Turks of western Turkestan, northern Asia, the Caucasus, and Eastern Europe had been enslaved (Bughra 1998, 465; Wahidi 1938, 19). The diaspora also hoped that the national revolution was by no means over and that it would end only when the “gift of independence” (*musteqilliq némiti*) was attained (Bughra 1998, 468–70). On the other hand, the renewed subjugation to the Chinese added to the historical suffering of East Turkestanis and multiplied their immemorial national misery:

Our Turkic nation (*Türk millitimiz*) is belligerent, boisterous, brave, strong, loyal, and generous. We especially value honor and reputation. So, after we made numerous sacrifices on the way to liberation and suffered in bad times, finally in 1931, a battle for independence and fight for freedom began in the whole of East Turkestan (*Sherqiy Türkistan*). This struggle continued for five or six years and ended with our flight and with tragedy for our homeland (*yurt*) and people (*khelq*). (Wahidi 1938, 3)

We are the Turks of Turkestan, our fatherland is Turkestan. Slavery does not suit us and enemies do not fit into our fatherland. Sadly, our ignorance has thrust us into this dark era. But speaking of our exile: even more dangerous circumstances are in front of us. If we want to retrieve our Turkestan from enemy hands, it is essential that we solve our educational, social, and economic problem and unite in one opinion and one ideal. (Wahidi 1938, 22)

To sum up, when we think about our fatherland, our people, and our refugee life, there is not another people on the face of the earth that is as miserable, as weak as us. We are under the oppression of the Chinese, and the Chinese are under the oppression of the Russians. It means that we are under twofold harsh tyranny. (Wahidi 1938, 20)

Politicization of National Interest

Turkic activists of the 1930s also thoroughly explained what they regarded as East Turkestanis' communal interest. Terminology for this concept varies—expressions such as “common interest” (*omumiy menpe’et*), “future of the nation” (*milletning istiqbali*), “happiness of the homeland” (*wetenning sa’aditi*), “benefit of the homeland and nation” (*yurt, milletning paydisi*), “needs of the homeland and nation” (*yurt millet hajatliri*), and others are used throughout the texts. Activities that strived toward achieving communal interests were referred to as “work for nation and homeland” (*weten we millet üchiün qilghan khizmet*; Bughra 1998, 384). For the “nationalists” (*milletperwer*; FT 16), the national interest seemed to have fully replaced religious virtues as the highest communal interest. “To value national interest” (*menpe’et milliyehmiyet bermek*; LET 4), “to save the nation” (*millet qutulup*; I, 10), to nourish “feeling for the homeland and the nation” (*weten we millet tuyghusi*; FT 16) and “love for nation” (*muhebbet milliyeh*; FT 19), and to promote “religious and national virtue and honor” (*diniy we milliy nomus we izzet*; I, 45) were the ultimate goals of human life:

There is of course not one kinsman (*tomurdash*) who in his beliefs and conscience that would not be willing to work for East Turkestan. Wherever

there is a brother willing to work for East Turkestan asleep, let him awake; if seated, let him stand up; if standing up, let him keep standing; if on the road, let him fly! Whoever wishes to work for Islamic religion and Turkicness, let him come to Great Turkestan! (1, 57–58)

Unlike in the contexts discussed in Chapter 2, where national interest was identified with a largely cultural emancipation and national awakening, East Turkestan nationalists of the 1930s went a step further—they primarily sought to achieve *political objectives*. Therefore, their politicized elaboration on the preceding national movement can be regarded as a *nationalist movement*. In nationalist discourse, the homeland's "national independence" (*milliy musteqilliq*; Wahidi 1938, 16) was the most important of all national interests, and national revolution was considered the only suitable means to attain "liberation" (*azadliq*; Bughra 1998, 400). The founding of the ETIR was interpreted, in some contexts, as having reached the final destination of the "path of independence" (*istiqlal yoli*; 1, 50). The exclusive position of independence in the interest hierarchy is illustrated in the opening passage of the first issue of the *Life of East Turkestan* on July 21, 1933—arguably the very first sentences uttered by the free press of the East Turkestan nation:

Thankfully, these days the downtrodden country of East Turkestan (*Sherqiy Türkistan memliket*) was saved from cruel enslavement, and national rule (*qewmiy hakimiyet*) was established. In the world, there is nothing as bad and cursed as living like prisoners and captives under the domination of a foreign nation (*millet*). Similarly, there is no greater blessing that can be imagined than that of national rule (*qewmi hakimiyet*) and of independence and glory of homeland (*weteniy istiqlal we izzet*). (LET 1)

On a similar note, Wahidi's memoir reads:

East Turkestan is a Turkic territory. It is necessary that there are Turks living in Turkestan and that there is Turkic government in Turkestan. If a foreigner comes and becomes the ruler, rebellion is a natural thing. Why should there not be a rebellion in Turkestan? This is to say that the ideal of the uprising in East Turkestan is independence. Factions (*partiye*) were formed in Turkestan, and their original goal was also independence.... Our ideal and craving was independence. Communists and occupants, who are today plundering our fatherland, are our mortal enemies (*jan düshmen*). Hey, you evil ravens, let go of our homeland!

Wherever you came from, go back there! If you do not leave in due time, later you will have a hard time! Hey, long live, you blessed East Turkestan! Long live your splendid descendants! Long live those who voluntarily sacrificed their lives on the path to East Turkestan's independence! (21)

Many other passages explicitly extolled the principles of autonomy—a “nation who is a true master of its homeland” (*wetenning heqiqiy igisi bolghan millet*; *LET* 3, 9) and “independent government” (*musteqil hökümet*; Wahidi 1938, 16)—as the most important goal of human activity. East Turkestani political activists explicitly regarded the strife for and preservation of national independence as the duty for each member of the nation: “So we rightfully learned the value and cost of the independent state (*musteqil dölet*). It is our religious, national, and political duty to strive to not let it slip from our hands” (1, 59). Freedom and its defense were of the same vital importance to a nation as water is to fish (1, 11). In turn, “our independent republic” (*musteqil jumhuriyiti-miz*; Wahidi 22) became the “basis of national people's liberation” (*milliy helq azadliqning asasi*; *LET* 12) and guaranteed the political, religious, national, and cultural rights of all fellow countrymen (*PFK* 1933, 9).

A closely related political goal of nationalist authors was the “state” (*dölet*), or country (*memliket*), of East Turkestan (1, 18, 55), which was claimed in their texts to stretch from Komul to Kashgar (*LET* 3, 4). The olden term “Six Cities” (*Alte Sheher*) was also occasionally used (*LET* 2; Wahidi 1938, 9, 12). In other contexts, the term *Sherqiy Turkestan* also implied northern Xinjiang because the periodicals closely followed unrest in Altay, Chöchek, and Ghulja (*FT* 16). The term “state” specifically implied “nation-state,” where the power was in the hands of local Turkic Muslims:

The state of East Turkestan (*Türkistan Sherqiy memlikiti*) is a free and Islamic region (*ölke*) stretching from Komul to Kashgar, which does not recognize Urumchi as its central authority and in which Muslims themselves administer their affairs. The Tianshan Mountains are the boundary between the two sides. The Chinese must not surpass the Tianshan Mountains and must stay within their limits. (*LET* 2)

As already mentioned above, for Turkic propagandists in the 1930s, religious denomination was a significant aspect of the East Turkestani national identity but was nevertheless largely secondary to ethnicity. The same hierarchy of identity criteria is discernible in the discourse of the East Turkestani state—even though it was a state of Muslims and was firmly based on the principles of religious law, it was also equally firmly founded upon principles of

republicanism and representative government. The ETIR was founded as a republic that was to provide for national needs (I, 23). It was headed by a “president” (*re’is jumhur*; I, 25), and it appears that Khoja Niyaz Haji was installed in this position prior to the proclamation of the state (LET 12). The Constitution of the ETIR provided for a “national congress” (*milliy mejlis*; I, 27), even though the principles of its selection and function were not specified. Officials acting in the administration had to pledge their allegiance to the republic (FT 13, 14). “Law” and “justice” (*hoquq, adalet*; LET 3; FT 13) were among the most important “principles of the state” (*dölet erkanliri*; Wahidi 1938, 17) drawn up to protect the rights of the people (FT 13). Interestingly, the ETIR was, at least on one occasion, referred to as the “People’s Republic of East Turkestan” (*Sherqiy Türkistan Khelq Jumhuriyiti*; FT 14). After the failure of the insurgency, some activities of Khoja Niyaz Haji and Mahmud Muhiti were denounced by exiled nationalists as flawed due to their disregard of public opinion. In contrast, the Khotan administration was given higher credit because it had more public support and strived for a “nationalized” (*milliyleshturmaq*) military and administration (Bughra 1998, 462–64).

Modernism in the East Turkestan Republic

Other national interests defined by East Turkestan political activists were similar to those featured in the modernist creed and cultural agitation examined in Chapter 2. The 1930s’ East Turkestan insurgent administration, itself consisting of many figures who often had been directly involved in new education, publishing, and social organizations, naturally took up the duty of implementing modernization. The sources feature a rich discourse of modernization, development, progress, improvement, reform, construction, awakening, and similar concepts. Implementing this *modernization imperative* was tightly linked to national well-being and welfare for the nationalist authors:

East Turkestan finds itself under a great difficulty. We need to carry out many reforms. Our core and essential motivation is to endow children of the nation with knowledge and education. It will thus be possible to familiarize them with science and technology. Nowadays, it is not possible for any nation to administer and defend their however large country without knowledge of education and education policy. In the administration, regulations and rules are necessary. In our military affairs, military training, and regulations are necessary. It is known that ten thousand untrained, disorganized, and aimless troops cannot compare to one thousand trained and organized soldiers. (LET 9)

If in the future we need to improve the educational, social, and political situation (*ehwal*) and make our lives stable and prosperous, then we need to subject all affairs to the needs of the people. (*FT* 17)

The rhetoric and attributes of modernization attest to the strong impact of the Jadidist movement on Xinjiang Turkic elites. Similar to the Russian Turkic situation, “unity” (*birlik*, *ittipaq*) of the East Turkestanian nation is a principle espoused on numerous occasions in the sources (*FT* 12, 15, 19; *I*, 11, 12, 48–49) and is seen as a precondition of realizing national interests: “All Turkestanis alive were united in one feeling, i.e. they were able to make decisions under the flag of national independence and gain their benefit” (Wahidi 1938, 16). In a clear allusion to Gasprinskiy’s *Tercüman*, the masts of the *Life of East Turkestan*, *Free Turkestan*, and *Independence* bore the slogans of “Unity in Mind, Action, and Thought” (*Dilde, ishde, fikirde, birlik*; *LET* 1) and “Unity in Religion, Language, Mind, Thought, and Action” (*Dinde, tilde, dilde, fikirde, ishde, birlikdur*; *I*, 1) respectively. The rhetorical push for unity also attests to the persisting effect of the dynamics of discord explored in Chapter 1. For instance, Abdughapur Shaptul, the highest religious and judicial activity of Kashgar, allegedly issued a holy ruling (Ar. *fatwā*) to Kashgar Muslims that to wage war on Khotanese rebels of early 1933 was a religious duty (Wahidi 1938, 13). It is also clear that, similar to other Jadidist platforms, the ETIR periodicals referred to a *cultural unity* for Turkic nations—not to a political unification for all Turkic nations—in order to create a greater Turkestan.

Again in a clear allusion to Gasprinskiy’s newspaper, the authors of the *Independence* saw their journal as an “interpreter” (*terjiman*) of the ETIA’s opinions, principles, and goals for the people and also as a moderately reformist mirror of modern trends and events. Similarly to Jadidist journals, the Xinjiang Turkic insurgent press sounded a loud call to the nation to restore its past grandeur. Occasionally, the Xinjiang Turkic modernist discourse even made direct use of Jadidist rhetoric, such as in comparing the insurgency to a spark of national liberation that lit up the whole region as the nation awakened from fatal sleep, and the nation-state was established (*I*, 63; *LET* 3; *FT* 13). The aforementioned Jadidist concept of unity even occasionally referred to the desire for a Turkic insurgents’ alliance with other rebelling factions, such as the Mongols of Karashahr (*FT* 14, 15, 16). Analogously, disunity and factionalism during the uprising were viewed as the most negative and undesirable phenomenon (*I*, 48–49; *LET* 4; *FT* 19). After the failure of the revolution, disunity was described as the direct cause for the collapse of the nation-state and national decline:

The reason for the collapse of our independence was the seeds of distrust. Each one of those Uyghurs, who had been trained in Russia, ran and joined the ranks of revolutionaries. These very people then slandered the principles of revolution and enabled the birth of treachery and distrust. (Wahidi 1938, 17)

The distrust among commanders not only devastated the soldiers, but even the very independence of whole Turkestan. It has thrust our fatherland into this tragic condition. Even though the Chinese, Russians, and Tungans have opposed the independence of East Turkestan and to preserve our sovereignty was enormously difficult. Had all the people united and with rightful intentions sacrificed their lives, it would have still been totally possible to preserve our independence. Unfortunately, this did not happen. (Wahidi 1938, 22)

Similar to the Russian and Soviet Jadidist project, the strongest focus of modernization efforts for East Turkestan insurgent theorists was education, by far. They saw the absence of schools as a cause of national decline and, therefore, one of the strongest impetuses of the insurgency. Similarly, modern “knowledge” (*ilim*) and “education” (*ma’arip*) was seen as a basic precondition to progress and the well-being of the nation:

[The] beacon of education and knowledge, under which children are able to clearly distinguish between black and white, therefore brings manifold benefits to nations in states all over the world. (*LET* 12)

The leadership of the ETIR was respected by the common population for being well educated (Wahidi 1938, 12). Shinmen Yasushi’s research revealed that many of the ETIR high officials were educated in modern secular schools, and some were even active promoters and organizers of new education (Shinmen 2001, 152–55). In a way, the ETIR can be compared to other short-time political endeavors with Jadidist participation, such as the Khoqand autonomy movement or Alash Orda, which were referred to in previous chapters. The high cultural background of the insurgency’s leading figures is acknowledged even by PRC materials (Ezizi 1997a, 216–20, 293).

Instituting “national and scientific” (*milliy we penniy*) schools was thus the most immediate objective that the insurgent administration pursued, since the very earliest stages of its existence. The very first issue of the *Life of East Turkestan* in July 1933 declared that “national education” (*ma’arip milliye*) was instituted in Kashgar as a result of the concern for the “future of the nation”

(*milletning istiqbali*) and in order to establish a foundation for the “well-being of the homeland” (*wetenning sa’aditi*). At the same time, modern schools were to remain in accordance with Islamic principles and continue to convey “religious education” (*diniy ma’arip*). Modern schools, pedagogical institutes, and education administration organs were thus among the first institutions to be launched in the new state. The almost sacral significance of modern education for the ETIR was underlined by the fact that the “pedagogical institutes” (*darilmu’elimin*) and “national schools” (*mekteb milliye*) in Kashgar were explicitly established by the administration—again in the name of “benefit for the homeland and nation” (*yurt we milletning paydisi*)—on the site where a Chinese temple had previously stood. This measure presumably aimed to publicly symbolize how previous Chinese political heteronomy and religious heterodoxy were giving way to the justice and modernity of the East Turkistani nation-state (*LET* 1). All issues of the *Life of East Turkestan* and the *Free Turkestan* are packed with zealous advocacy for modern knowledge and education; the need for the reform of existing religious schools; the eradication of illiteracy and ignorance; the need to establish pedagogical institutes, libraries, reading rooms, and endowments for educational institutions; and other similar concepts (*LET* 3, 4, 9, 12; *FT* 14, 17). The educational mission of the ETIR was also articulated in its Constitution, which declared instituting a regular and reformed education system as one of the duties of the ministry of education (*I*, 35–36). Mahmud Muhiti’s efforts in his position as an influential military commander to protect and effect modern education were regarded after the insurgency as a formidable contribution to national education (Bughra 1998, 456). Articles in the *Independence* also extol the virtues of modern knowledge and reformed education as preconditions to national development:

Blessed and mighty God has made us powerful by enabling us to establish an independent Islamic government. We need to support this government by establishing systematic and organized forces of knowledge. Knowledge is a powerful weapon. The strength of knowledge cannot be obstructed by any other strength. Those endowed with knowledge and learning soar in the air and float in the seas. (*I*, 54)

National publishing and printing was another significant item on the ETIR’s modernization agenda. The nationalists asserted that similar to the sphere of education, the total absence of printed Turkic periodicals during Yang’s and Jin’s rule strongly contributed to a national decline. National newspapers and publications were regarded as nations’ representatives, guides, interpreters,

and promoters of modernity and progress. Similar to the Jadidist publications of Russia, ETIR periodicals were to be the eyes of the nation and the pillars of “national well-being” (*sa’adet qewmiye*) and “national honor” (*izzet milliye*; LET 1, 2):

The *Independence* magazine is a political, social, academic, and literary guide on the path of defending and extending the freedom and religious and national power that became the possession of our fellow countrymen as a result of countless sacrifices and after suffering all kinds of bitter hardships over the long fifty-eight years of subjugation. (3)

Thus, immediately after the insurgent administration somewhat stabilized in July 1933, the objectives of founding the national press were realized. The “liberty-aimed” (*azadliqigha nishane*) *Life of East Turkestan* was founded as the press organ of the insurgency under the auspices of the department of education, which was also in charge of publishing textbooks for national schools as well as other printed matter (LET 1; 1, 35–36). The editor-in-chief of the *Life of East Turkestan* and the *Free Turkestan*, Qutluq Haji Shewqi, had also been previously very closely associated with the modern education movement. The *Life of East Turkestan*, the *Free Turkestan*, and the *Independence* were printed in trust for the ETIR by the Swedish Mission Press in Kashgar, and this fact was even openly stated in both publications (1, 74). Both periodicals were inspired by and resembled in structure, content, and purpose the Jadidist periodicals published in Russia (Khalid 1998, 124–25). Moreover, the *Independence* was published by the aforementioned ETIA that was closely affiliated with the Khotan faction of the insurgency, in which Muhemmed Imin Bughra, Sabit Damolla, and other figures had been also actively involved in new education (Shinmen 2001, 139–42). The ETIA also assisted the state in opening schools; publishing books; founding printing houses; and seeking, training, and appointing teachers throughout the country (1, 5–7, 55). In short, modern schools, periodicals, and national societies were seen by nationalists as instrumental to the “national awakening” (*milliy oyghinish*) that the Chinese had been trying to suppress, due to their fear that “the awakened ones cannot be forced back to sleep” (*oyghanghanni zorlap okhlatqili bolmas*; Bughra 1998, 365–67).

The ETIR and its periodicals also propagandized other modernist projects. There was a concern for public health. The ETIR’s Ministry of Health was to be responsible for the containment of contagious diseases, establishment of hospitals, and inspection of their hygiene standard, as well as the foundation of insane asylums, orphanages, and inoculation facilities (1, 36). The eradi-

cation of opium and hashish use was considered essential for the future life of the nation (*FT* 13). The modernist drive was also palpable in the state structure's reliance on Western models and assistance. Foreign specialists were to be contracted to assist in administration, education, public health, commerce, agriculture, and national defense with the specific goals of catching up with Western countries (*I*, 29, 34, 36, 55; Wahidi 1938, 15–16). The state also was to support the study of its nationals abroad (*I*, 35). The structure of the ministry of religious endowments was modeled on the two most progressive Islamic countries, Turkey and Egypt (*I*, 32). The ETIR was declared to be specifically modeled on the example of Mustafa Kemal's Turkey (*I*, 15, 51; *LET* 12), and it also strived to incur British assistance by espousing principles of Western culture (Newby 1986, 244–45; Shinmen 2004, 146–47). The news section of the *Life of East Turkestan* mainly covered events in Germany, Japan, and Soviet Russia (*LET* 9, 13), and it also reported on modern technological developments, such as aviation—referred to as flying in “air boats” (*hawa kéme*; *FT* 14). Such references to technological innovations stemming from the Soviet Union suggest that in the Xinjiang Turkic Muslims' perception, the image of Russia as a culturally advanced model of development was not disrupted even during the existence of “anti-Soviet” ETIR.

The language of the ETIR publications also showed signs of modernization. The articles were written in an almost vernacular language containing a number of modern loanwords. Vernacularization of textual practice was apparently an important strategy designed to incur popular support and promote national feeling among the population. For that reason, a national history was also written in the “East Turkestani dialect” (*Sherqiy Türkistan shiwesi*) of Turkic (Bughra 1998, xiii). The rising importance of Turkic as a national language was indicated by the fact that the peace agreement between Khoja Niyaz Haji and provincial troops was written in Turkic, Chinese, and Russian. Due to the strong Russian cultural and economic influence in the region, the overwhelming majority of loanwords in the ETIR sources came from Russian, for example, *fabrika* (factory), *konfransiye* (conference), *kontrol* (control), *qomandan* (commander), *gezite* (newspaper), *zhurnal* (magazine), *nomur* (number), *adres* (address), *zhandarma* (militia), *tanka* (tank), *khémiye* (chemistry), *passport* (passport), *programa* (program), *forma* (uniform), and *zinkografiye* (zincography). Russian loanwords were used even in the more religiously toned *Independence* in contexts where terms from Arabic or Persian could have been preferred on grounds of the sacral purity of language. Other loanwords came from English (e.g., names of the months in the mast of the *Life of East Turkestan* and the *Free Turkestan*, as well as the word “dollar” [*dolar*]), which

points to contact between Xinjiang Turkic progressives and elements of British culture during their stays abroad, as well as possibly to at least certain cultural influences of the British consulate in Kashgar. There is also a certain amount of vocabulary from Turkish (*öğretmek*, *maya*, *berge*, or the lyrics of the song sung during the proclamation of the ETIR: “*Bayraqımız kök bayraq, ordumuz altun ordu, Türkistan Türkning yurdu, Türkning olajaq*,” translated above), which illustrates both the pro-Western and pro-Turkish profile of the ETIR. The periodicals also printed poetry and fiction pieces with Jadidist topics similar to those found in the works of Abdukhaliq Uyghur and Memtili Tewpiq.

The brief existence of the ETIR and the scarcity of sources from that time prevent an accurate assessment of how efficient the state was in implementing the agenda it proclaimed. Perhaps the only two realms that somewhat reflect the ETIR’s actual competence were national education, illustrated by the modern education wave commenced under the patronage of Mahmud Muhiti (analyzed in Chapter 2), and national publishing, manifested by the sources researched in the above section. But although the existence of the ETIR occurred mainly in a sphere of policy formulation and propaganda, it is clear that the insurgency had a massive impact on Turkic intellectual notions of community and communal interest. In the texts originating in the secessionist intellectual milieu of the 1930s, the community was distinctly perceived as a primordial East Turkestani nation with an exclusive historical right to govern itself in the territory of its homeland, East Turkestan. The discourse of the nation and national homeland also featured a number of newly generated symbols and invented traditions, such as a national history and historiography, national misery, oppression, righteous revolution, a national flag, public festivities, a history of liberation struggle, glorification of its leaders, protection of national identity sites, and a national tragedy under renewed heteronomy. The highest political priority of the East Turkestani nation was founding its own nation-state, fully independent and governed by its citizens and for its citizens. In turn, the nation expected its nation-state to effect modernization, progress, and well-being. The *modernization imperative* particularly implied establishing a new national education and launching periodicals as well as publishing, social, cultural, and political organizations. It also included healthcare, vernacularization of the press and state practice, pro-Western international policy, and the embrace of modern technology. Satisfying a national need for well-being was, in turn, intended to cultivate popular loyalty and support for the new state. Thus, despite the fact that the ETIR did not have a chance to live up to its declared objectives, it is beyond doubt that, as aptly asserted by Shinmen Yasushi, its proclamation was “one remarkable consequence” of the nationalist

movement, enabled by the rise of a new indigenous intellectual and merchant strata, as well as the migration of new ideas, activities, and intellectuals from east to west (Shinmen 2001, 155). At the same time, the 1930s' insurgency and the proclamation of the East Turkestani nation-state, founded on principles of republicanism and modernism, were both a strong impetus to and a result of a fledgling modern national consciousness and nationalist ideology of the settled Turkic Muslims of southern and eastern Xinjiang, who were very soon to be called "Uyghurs."

3.2 Administration of Sheng Shicai (1934–44)

The ETIR was razed in early 1934 by Ma Zhongying's Tungan troops, who were retreating from the Soviet-backed alliance of the Chinese, White Russian, and Mongol forces advancing along the northern rim of the Taklamakan toward Kashgar. When the Tungans arrived in Kashgar on February 5, 1933, the ETIR leadership had already fled towards Yéngissar, while Khoja Niyaz Haji went his own way and concluded a peace treaty with the provincial administration in northwestern Xinjiang. The Khotan faction of the ETIR leadership suffered further defeats by Tungans at Yéngissar, where Abdulla and Nur Ahmadjan Bughra were killed, and Sabit Damolla fled to Yarkend. Meanwhile, Khoja Niyaz Haji arrested Sabit Damolla, proceeding later to Aksu, where he handed him over to provincial troops who promptly executed him. Provincial forces then continued their advance on Kashgar where they arrived around July 21, 1934, and ousted the Tungans from Kashgar to Khotan.¹⁰ Eventually, the whole of Xinjiang was under the control of Sheng Shicai, except the southern rim of the Taklamakan from Yarkend to Chaqiliq, which was held by Tungans remaining formally loyal to the central government of China (Forbes 1986, 121–27).

Sheng Shicai's assumption of power signaled a whole new deal for the region, virtually a "New Xinjiang" (*Yéngi Xinjiang*, 新新疆 *xīn Xīnjiāng*), an official term used by Sheng since 1934. His program terminated the semi-imperial administration of early Republican governors, Yang and Jin, and aspired to bring the province in line with contemporary developmental trends. The most representative of Sheng's policy statements were perhaps the Six Great Policies (*Alte Miqdar Siyaset*, 六大政策 *Liùdà zhèngcè*) of 1935, which altogether declared an embrace of the modernization imperative:

10 Ma Zhongying himself abandoned his men and, under unclear circumstances, crossed into the Soviet Union at Irkeshtam. His fate remains unknown.

anti-imperialism (*jahangirlikke qarshi turush*, 反帝 *fǎndì*), kinship with the Soviet Union (*Sowét Ittipaqigha yéqinlishish*, 親蘇 *qīn Sū*), equality of nationalities (*milletler barawer bolush*, 民平 *mín píng*), clean government (*dīyanetlik bolush*, 清廉 *qīng lián*), pacifism (*ténchlikni saqlash*, 和平 *hé píng*), and construction (*qurulush élip bérish*, 建設 *jiàn shè*). In contrast to Yang's and Jin's administration, when the Russo-Soviet influence in Xinjiang resulted from commercial and cultural contact or clandestine operation, Sheng Shicai introduced pro-Sovietism as his official policy. The Soviets had already assisted in the whole process of Sheng's rise to the post of Border Defense Commissioner (督辦 *dū bàn*)—the *de facto* ruler of the province—and provided military backup for taking control of Kashgar. Sheng's administration relied on Soviet advisors and material help in military affairs, agriculture, industry, politics, and all other fields, even allowing the USSR to tap into Xinjiang's natural resources, such as oil, gold, tungsten, manganese, tin, and uranium. The Soviet Union also wielded strong political leverage in the province and controlled virtually all of its affairs. Sheng even proposed the USSR communization of Xinjiang, which was rejected by Stalin because the USSR needed a strong and unified China to rely on against Japan (Mirovitskaya and Ledovsky 2007, 95). However, the degree of Soviet involvement led some scholars to call Sheng a "Red Warlord" (Whiting and Sheng 1958, 138) and Xinjiang a "virtual territorial extension of the Soviet Union" (Forbes 1986, 157). Xinjiang's approximation to the Soviet Union also reflected the region's historical function as a globally relevant hub of the ideologies and geopolitical interests of surrounding major powers.

Sheng's initial policies were drawn up in order for his administration to acquire support, or at least tolerance, of indigenous Turkic Muslims, who made up some 85 percent of Xinjiang's population. As discussed above, the Xinjiang Turkic population had a distinct ethno-religious identity, partially defined by common resentment toward Han supremacy and the Chinese administration, as well as by the perception that the Hans and China caused steep cultural and economic decline in their nation. The memories of bloody insurgency and political independence were still fresh after Sheng's troops entered Kashgar in 1934. Some features of this situation were similar to that of Central Asia, where the Soviets in the early 1920s had to counter the potential threat of Islamic and Turkic opposition by a populace that had theretofore identified itself with either subnational (tribe or clan) or supranational (Muslim, Turkic Muslim, or settled Turkic Muslim) patterns of identity. Therefore, Soviet strategists attempted to restrain the nascent nation-forming wave that was surging through Central Asian Muslim society and resolved to weaken Central Asian Muslims' pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic identity through so-called national delimitation (*natsional'noe razmezhevanie*), which ulti-

mately sought to establish nationality as the decisive category of identification. Stalin's definition of ethnicity as a "historically formed stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological formation, manifested through a common culture" (*Marxism and the National Question*, 1913; cited in Roy 2005, 62), with language as the most important criterion, was used as the exclusive theoretical foundation for making the Soviet new order in Central Asia. For the equivalent of the Russian terms *narod* (nation) and *natsional'nost'* (nationality) in Central Asian languages, the word *millet* was adopted, and its usage varied according to the political status of a particular ethnic group. Thus, the first Soviet census in Central Asia, taken in 1926, listed population groups solely by their ethnicity (Matley 1967, 106). Simultaneously, the Soviets took up complex affirmative action toward the new national identities through so-called indigenization (*korenizatsiya*), or providing the indigenous nationalities (*korennye natsional'nosti*) with formally autonomous national territories, a formally claimable right of secession, national languages, cultures, elites, books, journals, newspapers, movies, operas, museums, academies of sciences, folk music ensembles, histories, and other national attributes. In fact, the indigenous nationalities were even to be preferred, for instance, in hiring and admissions over Russians and other western, implicitly more advanced, nationalities of the Soviet Union. Initially, the affirmative action and legal equality of all nationalities of the Soviet state resulted in a kind of cultural pluralism, in which the distinct and unique identities of respective nationalities were to be nurtured by the state (see Connor 1984, 201, 213–14; Martin 2001, 1–2, 125–26; Roy 2005, 58–65; Wimbush 1985, 73; Bruchis 1984, 132).

The Soviet strategy was adopted by Sheng's administration. In order to dissolve the common ethno-religious identity of East Turkestanis, Sheng separated their nation (*millet*), which previously was a master of its own state, into several nationalities (*millet*) that were to make up one of several constituents of the Xinjiang province in the future. At least two all-province meetings of people's representatives (*Ölkilik Awam Khelq Qurultiyi*) in Urumchi in 1934 and 1935 performed the officially sanctioned act of "determination of names of fourteen Xinjiang nationalities" (*Xinjiang milletlirining namining békitilishi*), or in Chinese terminology "national delimitation" (民族識別, *mínzú shíbié*; Burhan 1986, 528; Sayrani 2000, 65), which in fact also meant a symbolical recognition of their existence: "Since that meeting, there were fourteen nationalities in Xinjiang" (Burhan 1986, 529). Starting from 1936, the use of the ethnonym "Uyghur" was legally substantiated by the provincial government's regulations (Kamalov 2006, 30). Shortly after official recognition of Xinjiang's nationalities, their figures were roughly estimated as follows:

TABLE 3.1 *Estimated population of Xinjiang after 1933*

Nationality	Population	Percentage of Xinjiang's total population
Uyghur (維吾爾 <i>Wéiwú'ěr</i>)	2,900,173	77.75
Kazak (哈薩克 <i>Hāsàkè</i>)	318,716	8.55
Han (漢 <i>Hàn</i>)	202,239	5.41
Hui (回 <i>Huí</i>)	92,146	2.47
Kyrgyz (柯爾克孜 <i>Kē'ěrkèzī</i>) ¹¹	65,248	1.75
Mongol (蒙 <i>Měng</i>)	63,018	1.69
Taranchi (塔蘭其 <i>Tǎlánqí</i>)	41,307	1.11
Russian (歸化 <i>Guīhuà</i>) ¹²	13,408	0.36
Shiwe (錫泊 <i>Xībó</i>)	9,203	0.25
Tajik (塔吉克 <i>Tǎjíkè</i>)	8,867	0.24
Uzbek (烏孜別克 <i>Wūzībiékè</i>)	7,966	0.21
Tatar (塔塔爾 <i>Tǎtǎ'ěr</i>) ¹³	4,601	0.12
Solon (索倫 <i>Suǒlún</i>)	2,489	0.07
Manchu (滿 <i>Mǎn</i>)	670	0.02
Xinjiang Totals	3,730,051	100

Lattimore 1950, 110; Chinese characters according to Du 1938, 54

Turning East Turkestanis into Uyghurs

The following sections of this chapter illustrate that the way Sheng dealt with the issue of East Turkestani identity was in many aspects similar to Soviet indigenization strategies and affirmative action principles. In particular, Sheng's abandonment of the misleading terms "Hui" and the derogatory "Rag-Head" used by Yang's and Jin's administration, as well as his introduction of the name "Uyghur" into state practice, was a remarkable act of official reinstitution of a term that had not been used to refer to a community of people for some

- 11 The name was used along with another term for Kyrgyz, Burut (布魯特 *Bùlǔtè*; Burhan 1986: 528).
- 12 The term Guīhuà means 'naturalized person' and refers to the fact that most Russians immigrated to Xinjiang for religious, economic or political reasons at the turn of the century or after 1917.
- 13 The term Tatar replaced another name for used for Tatars, Nogay (腦蓋依 *Nǎogàiyī*; Burhan 1986: 528).

four hundred years. Sheng's revival of the label "Uyghur" as the ethnonym of the indigenous settled Turkic Muslims of southern and eastern Xinjiang reflected both the use of the term by Turkic intellectuals in Soviet Central Asia in the 1910s and the subsequent official recognition of the ethnic category by the Soviet state throughout the 1920s (considered in Chapter 2). It has been argued that one principal actor behind Sheng's ethnic ethno-engineering project might have been Garegin Abramovich Apresov, Soviet Consul-General in Urumchi, who might have instructed Sheng (Rudelson 1997, 149). Another hypothesis speculates that the idea might have been suggested to Burhan, a very influential delegate to both provincial assemblies that officially promulgated the term, by Abdukhaliq Uyghur, who embraced this concept during his travels to western Central Asia in the 1910s and 1920s (Rudelson 1997, 149; this fact was not mentioned in Burhan's own memoir). Other Xinjiang Turkic intellectuals led by Russian/Soviet Tatar activist Heyder Sayrani are also said to have propagandized the introduction of the term "Uyghur" in the Chöchek newspaper, *Our Voice*, around 1920 (Sayrani 2000, 65). Another theory argued that Sheng's decision was a reaction to demands by the Association for the Promotion of Uyghur Education (Lattimore 1950, 125), which possibly refers to the Chinese term for the Uyghur Enlightenment Association (UEA), whose activities are considered later in this chapter. In any case, in the "silent struggle" (*ün-tinsiz küresh*) over naming the indigenous settled Turkic Muslims of Xinjiang, it was the Soviet concept of Uyghur nationality that was to ultimately prevail (Kamalov 2006, 30).

Similar to the Turkic insurgency in the early 1930s, Sheng's institution of the term "Uyghur" had a strong influence on the perceptions of communal identity and interests of Xinjiang Turkic Muslim intellectuals. Sheng started projecting the concept of Uyghur nationality onto the population of southern Xinjiang immediately after he took control of the core insurgent area around Kashgar. As mentioned above, Sheng needed both to eliminate the strong sense of Turkic Muslim identity that was hostile to the Han and Chinese administration and to cultivate popular support for his government. In order to counter the existing concept of the politically sovereign and autochthonous East Turkestanian nation inhabiting its primordial homeland, he introduced the idea of a Uyghur nationality, which shared its home, Xinjiang, with other nationalities. All the nationalities inhabiting Xinjiang were then entitled to govern their common homeland. In order to preserve the East Turkestanis' feeling of political autonomy, Sheng continued the use of the word "*millet*," previously used by the East Turkestanian political activists. At the same time, Sheng fully adopted the modernization imperative of the Turkic insurgency. So although the actual political interests of the ETIR were utterly incompatible with those

of Sheng's rule, many of the keywords of Sheng's early public discourse (until 1937) were, in fact, deliberately designed to invoke a sense of continuity in the insurgent creed. However, the seemingly subtle differences embodied significant disparities between conceptions of community and its interests during the ETIR's political autonomy and Sheng's renewed heteronomy.

The publication of the insurgent periodical *Free Turkestan*, after being discontinued in early February 1934 on the eve of the Tungan units' crushing of the ETIR, was resumed shortly after the provincial troops entered Kashgar in July of the same year. The periodical came out under the name *New Life* (*Yéngi Hayat*; *NL*), which ingeniously evoked both the start of a new era under new government as well as continuity with the previous Turkic nationalist creed.¹⁴ Partial continuation of the preceding nationalist drive was also implied by the fact that Qutluq Haji Shewqi remained in the position of editor-in-chief. Nevertheless, the regular use of the pronoun "we" in the articles and omnipresent acclamations of new governmental policies suggest that the contents of the *New Life* are likely to have been, at least to a certain degree, determined directly by Sheng's administration or even the Soviet Union, perhaps through an advisor to the editorial board. This assumption, however, awaits further corroboration by other research. In any case, it will be shown that many tenets formulated by Sheng Shicai were acceptable or even attractive to Turkic intellectuals; therefore, the articles in the *New Life* could just as well have been written by its editorial staff.

The first issue of the *New Life* under research here is Number 2, dated August 30, 1934, which starts as follows:

The new government now installed in the country (*memliket*) is a civilized government, which has taken up mainly the goals and obligations of devoting itself to rightfulness (*hoquq*) and humanity (*insaniyetperwerlik*), uniting under equal rights and justice Uyghurs, Hans, Mongols, Tungans, Kyrgyz, Kazaks, and other such children of the homeland (*weten baliliri*) residing in the whole region (*ölke*), eradicating factionalism

14 The altered name of the periodical, as well as the general concept of Sheng Shicai's early administration, possibly drew on the New Life Movement (新生活運動). Inaugurated by Chiang Kai-shek on February 19, 1934, and disseminated to at least nine provinces and municipal centers of China by April of the same year, the campaign could have inspired Sheng by its strictly top-down efforts to direct popular participation toward strengthening the polity and attaining national rejuvenation and social modernization (Dirlik 1975).

(*ayrimichiliq*), establishing friendly relations among all the people (*khelq*), and working and acting toward the good and peace of all (*hem-mining yakhshiliq we asayish*). (1)

From the very first passages of the *New Life*, one of the key terms featured by insurgent nationalist authors—"East Turkestani"—disappeared, and the majority population of Yettishahr was instead referred to as the "Uyghur nationality" (*Uyghur milliti*; *NL* 10, 13, 14, 19, 20, 43, 44, 243 et al.). The Turkic identity of the Uyghurs was still acknowledged but predominantly only when referring to the past. In the present, the East Turkestani "nation" (*millet*) transformed into several "nationalities" (*millet*), Uyghurs being the most numerous one:

The children of man in the whole world are divided into numerous religious denominations, as well as into many nations and lineages. For example, just as there are Arabs, Turks, the English, the French, Italians, Russians, Indians, or Hans, there is us, the people of Xinjiang (East Turkestan), most of whom are, in terms of religion, Muslim. As regards nationality (*qewmiyet*) and descent (*uruq*), we are a branch of the great Turanic nations (*Turan aqwamisidin bir ulugh shahche bolgan*). All civilized nations (*medeniy millet*), and even ignorant nations (*jahil qewm*), of the world know of what descent they are. Because the overwhelming part of our people is utterly ignorant (*nadan*) and unaware (*gheplet*), we have also forgotten of what descent we are. When someone asks us who we are, we say we are Muslims. Correct, we are Muslims, as regards religion. But we also need to know ourselves from the aspect of lineage (*nesil*) and descent (*uruq*). Is it not a shame and disgrace when a person does not know or forgets the name of his father and runs around asking others about it? Simply, we are children of Uyghurs. Uyghur is our honorable national name (*shereplik milliy atimiz*). (*NL* 4)

Most of the people living in Xinjiang belong to Turanic nationalities (*millet*)—Uyghurs, Taranchis, Uzbeks, Kazaks, and Kyrgyz. Besides these, there are also Hans, Tungans, Kalmyks, Shiwes, Manchus, and a few Russians and Nogays. Most of the Russians are refugees who fled to this place in the wake of the Great Russian Revolution. The Hans make up approximately 4.5 percent of all the people. Uyghurs and Taranchis are agriculturalists and horticulturalists in southern districts. They raise silkworms, and a small portion of them make a living in business and handicrafts. Kazaks, Kyrgyz, and Kalmyks are involved in animal husbandry. (*NL* 53)

Similar to the ETIR activists, Sheng's administration also supported the invention of history and the symbology of the Uyghur nation. The new rephrased discourse stated that Uyghur culture, "civilization" (*medeniyet*) came into being a thousand years before Islam with Oghuz Khan in modern Mongolia and the area surrounding the Tianshan. The Uyghurs gradually abandoned their nomadic life and developed a highly developed civilization. Its artifacts were on display in museums in Paris, London, Berlin, Leningrad, Vienna, and other Western capitals. Then, after the Uyghur civilization merged with the Islamic one, learning and education continued to flourish and Uyghur became an elite language (NL 91). Many articles were devoted to civilization, music, literature, knowledge, education, arts, crafts, burial customs, language, cultural heritage, and similar historical and contemporary attributes of the "ancient" (*qedimiy*) Uyghur people (NL 17, 29, 107, 210, 236). Participants of the recent Turkic anti-Chinese and anti-Han insurgency were glorified as "Uyghur youths" (*Uyghur yigitliri, Uyghur baliliri*; NL 43: 1), despite the fact that the uprising had strived to establish an independent East Turkestan, not Uyghuristan. These articles argued to describe East Turkestanis in a way that was very similar to that of Turkic nationalists in articles published only several months prior.

Sheng sought to dissolve the common ethnoreligious identity of the majority of the Turkic population of Xinjiang by dividing it into Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Taranchis, Uzbeks, and Tatars. He also aimed to create direct animosity among and within the individual nationalities of Xinjiang. For instance, he acknowledged the Taranchis as a separate nationality, even though they shared a number of common characteristics with the population recognized as Uyghurs (Lattimore 1950, 126). In other contexts, Sheng chose to include several subaltern Turkic communities under the category of Uyghur. To borrow an expression from an acclaimed scholar, "stretching the short, tight skin" (Anderson 1991, 86) of the Uyghur nationality over disparate subaltern subjects happened in the case of Dolans, a community involved in animal husbandry in the Merkit-Maralbéshi region in southwestern Xinjiang (Lattimore 1950, 127, 166); in the case of Lopliks, a community of fishermen and hunters around the Lop Nor (Svanberg 1987); and in the case of Abdals (referring to themselves as Eynu), a group scattered throughout southern Xinjiang (Rudelson 1997, 24, 48). Inclusion of such heterogeneous communities into one category easily created internal fissures within the Uyghur nationality. Similarly, by future adoption of different policies toward respective nationalities, Sheng managed to engender disagreements within the entire Turkic population of Xinjiang. This was, in fact, a continuation of an ancient Chinese diplomatic strategy of "using barbarians to control other barbarians" (以夷制夷 *yǐ Yí zhì Yí*; discussed in Chapters 1 and 2). Several distinct and even mutually contending nationali-

ties naturally posed a substantially reduced risk to Sheng's authority as compared to a united East Turkestani nation. This measure also later allowed Sheng to utterly omit the use of specific ethnonyms and use only the generic term "nationalities." Thus, in later issues of the *New Life*, the term "Uyghur" was rarely used, and Xinjiang was mostly referred to as a region inhabited not by Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Taranchis, Uzbeks, Tatars, and other groups, but instead by an anonymous "fourteen nationalities" (*on töt millet*). Similarly, the provincial government later promised to represent the interests of the "nationalities" of Xinjiang, and not specifically of the Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Taranchis, and others.

Sheng's transformation of "East Turkestanis" into "Uyghurs" was also accompanied by a shift in the discourse of the homeland. The previous nationalist concept of the East Turkestani nation that was entitled to political sovereignty over its national homeland was replaced by the notion of Uyghurs as one segment of the "people of East Turkestan" (*Sherqiy Türkistan khelqi*) or of "people living in East Turkestan" (*Sherqiy Türkistanda yashighuchi khelq*; *NL* 5). As Sheng strived to reconcile his administration with unfavorable Turkic popular sentiment, the term "East Turkestan," or even "our sacred homeland East Turkestan" (*muqeddes wetinimiz Sherqiy Türkistan*; *NL* 16), remained in use. However, several other notions were newly introduced into the rhetoric of *New Life*, arguably to diminish the memories of the recently independent ETIR. Frequently used was the official name "Xinjiang" (*Xinjiang*); Uyghurs, along with other nationalities, were referred to as "children of Xinjiang" (*Xinjiang baliliri*; *NL* 19). An alternate neologism, "Xinjiang person, a Xinjiangese" (*Xinjiangliq*), started to be employed to designate inhabitants of East Turkestan (*NL* 20). Sometimes the word "Xinjiang" simply replaced "East Turkestan" in a specific figure of speech favored by insurgent nationalist writers, such as "Great Xinjiang" (*ulugh Xinjiang*, *NL* 12) instead of the nationalist "Great East Turkestan." The two names were often used together as an explanation of one another, as in "East Turkestan (Xinjiang)" or vice versa (*NL* 2, 10, 12, 29, 51; *PFK* 1935, 12; *PFK* 1937, 10). Another term introduced as an alternative to "East Turkestan" was "Uyghuristan" (*NL* 25, 32, 43; *PFK* 1935, 3, Figure 3.2 [Cover of the manual *Rearing of Silkworms*]; *PFK* 1936, 5, Figure 3.3 [Cover of the *Uyghuristan Almanac*, 1937]), which effectively recognized the Uyghurs as the master nationality in their national homeland. The term "Six Cities" (*Alte Sheher*) started to be used during Sheng's rule with higher frequency than in the insurgent texts (*NL* 8, 11, 43). Occasionally, the name "Chinese Turkestan" (*Chiniy Türkistan*; *NL* 53) also appeared. All of the above toponyms are, of course, used in the sense of a "province" (*ölke*) or "district" (*wilayet*) of the "country" (*memliket*) of China (*NL* 9, 19, 43, 259, 261).



FIGURE 3.2 Cover of the manual Rearing of Silkworms

Rearing of Silkworms (Yépekchilik. Шелководство.), AH 1354/AD 1935/AR 24, published by the "Silk-Production Center in South Uyghuristan" (Jendubiy Uyghuristanda Yépekchilik Merkizi; PFK 1935, 3). Permission for publication: Lund University Library.

Sheng also aimed to justify his rule by endorsing the religious identity of East Turkestan Muslims. His administration formally guaranteed freedom of religious worship (NL 3). Uyghurs continued to be perceived as an "Islamic population of East Turkestan" (*Sherqiy Türkistan ahali islamiyesi*; NL 11). Issues of

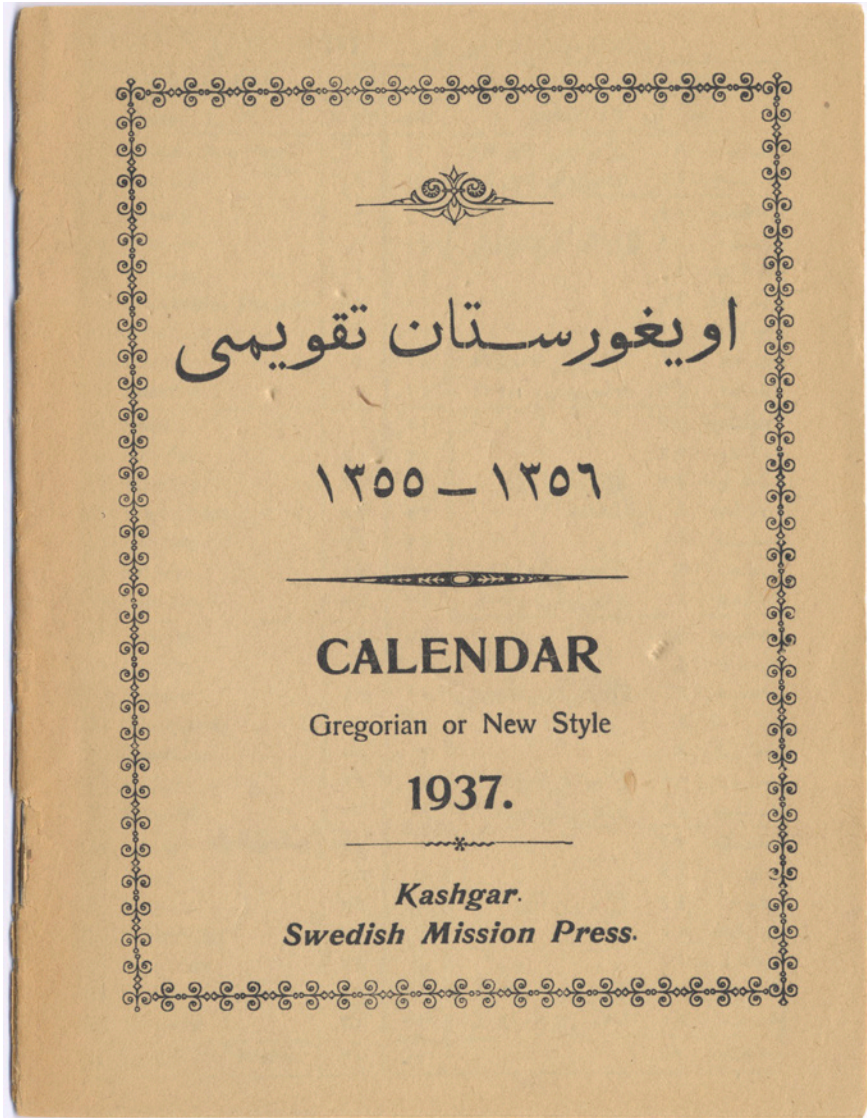


FIGURE 3.3 Cover of the Uyghuristan Almanac, 1937
 Uyghuristan Almanac (Uyghuristan Teqwiymi), AH 1355-56 (AD 1937). Permission
 for publication: Lund University Library.

New Life continued to be dated according to the Islamic calendar and contained many features of religious discourse, such as the formulation “God willing” (*NL* 12) or congratulatory messages to the readership on religious occasions (*NL* 239, 245). Uyghur figures collaborating with Sheng’s administration, such as Khoja Niyaz Haji or Mahmud Muhiti, were addressed in religious terms, such

as “holy warrior” (NL 3, 5), despite the fact that their alliance with Sheng’s government had nothing to do with religious warfare. On numerous occasions, Sheng stressed that he governed in accordance with religious principles (NL 3; PFK 1935, 12; Wahidi 1938, 19). Similar to previous Chinese administrations, Sheng also formed an alliance with the traditional Islamic establishment. The above-mentioned Kashgar cleric Abdughapur Shaptul became one of the most prominent Uyghur figures collaborating with Sheng’s administration (NL 4; PFK 1937, 10). At the same time, the alignment of Sheng’s state power with Islamic principles effectively diminished the prominence of religion in the lives of East Turkestani Muslims because religious values were suddenly on par with those of Sheng’s secular government (NL 9). In some contexts, the reference to religion is made in a way that inconspicuously, yet probably not inadvertently, denigrates it, such as in an article that portrays the “Muslims” of East Turkestan as deprived of education and unaware of national and state virtues (NL 11).

Besides incorporating prominent figures and respected personages into his administration to legitimize his government, Sheng also built upon other features of Uyghur national identity that were developed by Turkic nationalists. Sheng and other high officials were portrayed in propaganda as fatherly characters protecting all nationalities and struggling for their well-being and progress (NL 2, 9, 22, 91). The *New Life* also propagandized the public dimension of state affairs under the new administration—public speeches, glorification of leaders and officials, announcement of policies and resolutions, exclamation of nationalistic poetry, and people’s marches (NL 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 26, 43). The occupation of Kashgar by provincial troops was interpreted as a symbolical beginning of a new era of order and peace (NL 2). April 12, the date of Sheng’s rise to power, started to be celebrated as a dawn of liberty when all nationalities attained “parity” (*musawat*), “equality” (*baraberlik*), and “compatriotism” (*wetendashliq*; NL 53, 251). Disruption of public festivities was regarded as undermining the authority of Urumchi (PFK 1937, 10). Sheng’s administration also instituted a rich symbology for the ROC, of which Xinjiang was still formally part of, such as dating the *New Life* according to the year of the republic (*Anno Respublica* [AR]), celebrating October 10 as a public festival (NL 193), recognizing the flag of KMT China (NL 12), praising Sun Yat-sen’s merits (NL 9), holding celebrations of unity with Nanking (NL 53, 249), conducting briefings on KMT policy (NL 254), holding demonstrations in support of Chinese soldiers fighting the Japanese in Suiyuan (綏遠; NL 238), and attaching ceremonial importance to revolutionary milestones of Republican history, including President Yuan Shikai’s (袁世凱, 1859–1916) acceptance of the Japanese Twenty-One Demands (二十一個條項 *Èrshíyī gè tiáoxiàng*) in 1915 and the May Fourth Movement of 1919 (NL 258).

Sheng also resumed the Turkic insurgents' discourse of national decline and national rebellion. The articles in *New Life* on these topics were similar in content, vocabulary, and tone to the texts in the *Life of East Turkestan*, the *Free Turkestan*, and the *Independence*. *New Life* featured the same repetitive denunciations of preceding Republican governors who had not represented the interests of the people. Instead, they instituted a totalitarian government; enslaved the population; neglected social, national, and education issues; and ignored reforms and development, which led to national decline (*NL* 4, 5, 9, 12, 14, 17). Thus, their misadministration justified the people's revolt against Yang and Jin's system (*NL* 3, 19). The independence-minded nationalist Turkic insurgency was portrayed during Sheng's era not as a struggle against the "Han nationality" (*Hanzu, Khitay milliti*) or China, per se, but as a struggle against the oppressive old order (*NL* 261). Initially, *New Life* refrained altogether from condemnations of the separatist creed of Turkic nationalists. In sum, by intercepting and rephrasing the Turkic insurgent activists' discourse of the Xinjiang Turkic Muslim identity, Sheng made a very complex effort at creating the impression that his new government was actually something of a direct continuation of the ETIR's agenda.

Uyghur National Interest under Renewed Heteronomy

Sheng's administration also appropriated a large part of the insurgent discourse of national interest. Similar to Turkic nationalist publications, *New Life* devoted a great deal of space to discussion of the homeland's well-being, interests of the people, and needs of the nation (*NL* 3, 4, 5, 13, 17, 25). As in the case of the ETIR, it was Sheng's state that was to represent national interests in conditions of "liberty, freedom" (*azadliq, hürriyet*), "peace" (*emniyet, aram*), and "stability" (*asayish*) after overthrowing the old dysfunctional order (*NL* 4, 9, 17, 43). Sheng's government was even specifically termed the "Government of New Freedom" (*Yengi Azadliq Hökümiti; NL* 2). However, Sheng's line also sought to counter the secessionist ideas prevalent among Turkic Muslims. Thus, the new freedom differed substantially from the old one:

We, the children of Xinjiang, Uyghurs, Hans, Mongols, Kalmyks, Shiwes, Solons, Turghuts, Qoshuts, Tatars, Tungans, Kyrgyz, Kazaks, and Russians, have become children of the homeland with equal rights. None of us is her stepchild, we are all her own. Religious and sectarian differences (*din we mezheb ayrimichilik*) are not in conflict with this unity. The nine-point Constitution (*qanun asasi*) announced by the new government unites us and pacifies us by the means of reason. Everybody's freedom in religious and national affairs is safeguarded. . . . It is necessary that for the sake of well-being and fortune of our homeland, we, the nationalities of

East Turkestan (Xinjiang), tightly connect in perfect unity and with genuine and sincere hearts on the basis of compatriotic relations. (*NL* 19)

Although not overtly formulated, the emphasis on unity among the nationalities was a substantial departure from the ideal of an independent East Turkestan nation-state envisioned by Turkic nationalists. Under Sheng, the most important political objective for Uyghurs and other Turks was “unity” (*ittipaq, birlik*). In a threefold way, the concept of unity pointed to the inter-ethnic solidarity of all Xinjiang nationalities, to their allegiance to provincial authorities, and also to Xinjiang’s territorial integrity with the ROC. By emphasizing the unity line, Sheng strove to repel the specter of secessionist aspirations still cherished by a large portion of the Turkic population. Previously, the concept of unity between Turkic Muslims and other communities in East Turkestan had occasionally appeared in the insurgent literature. However, during Sheng’s administration, the unity of nationalities with each other and with the homeland turned into the most prominent political interest of the Uyghurs that the *New Life* articulated (2, 3, 4, 5, 19, 259; *PFK* 1935: 12 et al.):

The new government was formed . . . in order to concentrate on the unity and friendship of all people of Xinjiang, to give each nationality justice, rightfulness, and freedom and to facilitate reforms and the development of political, cultural, and social conditions of each nationality. The leaders of the Uyghur people (*Uyghur khelqi*), headed by Khojam Niyaz Hajim and Commander Mahmud, formed a close relationship and unity with the new government. . . . We all need to unite. From now on, all of you unite! Actually, the purpose of forming today’s assembly is to unite and protect our rights. Our unity will, of course, give us great strength, and all our affairs will go well. We need to be aware of the value of these beneficial things. (*NL* 3)

The new government was referred to in some articles as the “Government of Unity” (*Ittipaq hökümiti*; 43). Unity was also the essential principle of the newly established provincial assembly—in Chinese, named the People’s United Congress (民眾聯合會 *Mínzhòng liánhéhuì*), in Uyghur, called the Nationalities’ Unity Congress (*Milletler Ittipaq Mejlisi*; *NL* 3). Unity was also espoused by Sheng and Han officials, as well as by Uyghur collaborators with Sheng’s administration (*NL* 3). The newly separatist Turkic nationalities were depicted in *New Life* as holding hands with the new government (*NL* 53). All the nationalities were to form a “perfect unity” (*kemal ittipaq*) based on feelings of “friendship” (*dostluq*), “love” (*muhebbet*), and “compatriotism” (*weten-*

dashliq; *NL* 3, 19). The Hans and Tungans, against whom the Turkic Muslims only a few months ago had waged bitter warfare and ethnic cleansing and who were recently considered “mortal enemies” on the pages of the newspaper, suddenly became referred to by *New Life* as “fellow compatriots” (*wetendash*; *NL* 19). The introduction into the periodical’s language (which, since Sheng’s period, can start being called “Uyghur” language) of a new and emotionally neutral Chinese loanword *Hanzu* denoting the Han (from 漢族, *Hànzú*), and its use in place of the Turkic term *Khitay* (which the Chinese, for an unknown reason, consider derogatory), also strived to augment the feeling of interethnic solidarity (*NL* 14). Unity of the nationalities was also propagandized to other Turkic nationalities, who could have possibly harbored anti-China sentiment. A page from a Tatar primer from 1941, during the very late period of Sheng’s administration, features the text,

There are Hans, Mongols, Shiwes, Manchus, Solons, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Uyghurs, Tatars, Taranchis, Tungans, Russians, Uzbeks, Tajiks, and also other peoples (*khelq*) living in Xinjiang. Children of Hans, Mongols, Shiwes, Solons, Kazak, Kyrgyz, Uyghurs, Tatars, Taranchis, Tungans, Russians, Uzbeks, Tajiks, and other peoples’ workers are friends. (Janishif 2001, 150)

The rhetoric of unity between Xinjiang and the homeland, and of the unity of nationalities in the whole ROC, was also a frequently used concept in *New Life* (*NL* 8, 19 et al.). The word “republic” was even translated into Uyghur as “republic of people’s unity” (*khelq ittifaqi jumhuriyiti*; *NL* 226, 256). Turkic secessionist nationalism, the most intimidating challenge to Urumchi’s authority, was clad by Sheng’s discourse with euphemisms, such as disunity, narrow nationalism, factionalism, treachery, spreading malevolent rumors, and false propaganda; however, these were condemned as the most detrimental social and ideological phenomena (*NL* 2, 19, 43, 254; *PFK* 1937: 10 et al.).

Besides ethnic and political unity, other prominent political ideals of Sheng’s administration were representative government, equality of nationalities, rights of all the people, justice, rule of law, and similar attributes of modern republicanism (*NL* 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 16, 19, 43, 243, 258 et al.):

We, Uyghurs, who for years of slavery and subjugation had been shedding bloody tears, have, as a result of several years’ revolution, acquired all rights. Besides justice, the new government declared that it will grant us rights, which are as extensive as the amount of blood we had shed and of the sacrifices we had given. It will also give us many seats in the

government due to the majority of Uyghurs in Xinjiang. As for the government, it will be a government of every nationality living in Xinjiang. It is not so that someone from elsewhere is our leader. Look—besides the vice-chairman of the province, in all high positions there are Uyghurs in charge of government work. In the same way, in places where Uyghurs form a majority, the county magistrates will be also Uyghurs, and Uyghur soldiers will be in charge of defense. (NL 25)

As regards the characteristics of the new government, “righteousness” (*adalet*) and “law” (*hoquq*) were among the most frequently used words throughout *New Life*. The government was termed the “people’s government” (*khelq hökümiti*; NL 15, 16, 21) or even “people-loving government” (*khelqperwer hökümet*; NL 250, 261), which again stressed the principle of representing the interests of all the people of Xinjiang. Similar to the ETIR, Sheng’s government also took care to create the impression that state practice was becoming a public matter. An open ceremony, portrayed in the sources as the election of delegates into the Kashgar “national congress” or “people’s congress” (*milliy mejlis, khelq qurultiyi*), took place in August 1934 in front of the Eid Kah Great Mosque in Kashgar in the form of a mass rally, which featured leading administrative and military officials. All the elected representatives subsequently held lengthy speeches (NL 2). The newspaper also often included specific descriptions of the process of delegation of local people’s congresses and their relation to provincial assembly, as well as news from the local congresses (NL 5, 44).

Sheng also incorporated some influential figures associated with the Turkic insurgency and nationalist intelligentsia into his power structure. Apart from Khoja Niyaz Haji and Mahmud Muhiti, one government post was held by Yunus Beg, a first-year student of the Urumchi Russian School of Law and Politics, promoter of modern education, leader of an uprising in Turfan, and minister of the ETIR (I, 13; Shinmen 2001, 154; Burhan 1986, 226–27, 307–9; Khushtar 2000b, 245–46). Another similar figure was Tahir Beg, Yunus Beg’s fellow progressive activist from the 1920s and once a supporter of East Turkestan independence, who was appointed by Sheng in charge of the commission for nationalities and several other positions (Burhan 1986, 226–27, 307–9, 569; Khushtar 2000b 245–46). These individuals’ acceptance of posts in Sheng’s government further testifies to the persistence of the centrifugal dynamics of discord, or disunity principle within Uyghur society. Sheng also explicitly strove to institute equal legal and social positions for both men and women (NL 3, 52), which was a strategy that covertly undermined the influence of Islam and the traditional clergy.

Sheng's discourse of representative government also included extensive references to the attributes and policies of the ROC as a symbol of republicanism. Thus, the rule of Yang and Jin was portrayed as an era of oppression and corruption, which had nothing in common with principles of republicanism. In contrast, Sheng's government was interpreted in *New Life* as the true heir of Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles. As mentioned in a previous chapter, Chinese republicanism had in fact first been propagandized in Xinjiang by the Ili revolutionaries in 1911, who endorsed its essentials—equality of the Xinjiang nationalities (the Hans, Mongols, Huis, Turkic Muslims, and Kazaks) and representative government (Ezizi 1997a, 83, 87). However, it was only Sheng's government that was described in *New Life* as a period when the ideals of republican revolution were to be fully realized:

A new government was formed on the 12th day of the 3rd month of the 22nd year¹⁵ on the basis of rights (*hoquq*) guaranteed by the Three People's Principles, and legal equality for all nationalities of Xinjiang was announced. [The government] conferred with the leaders of the Uyghur revolution (*Uyghur inqilabi*), Excellency Khoja Niyaz Hajim and Honorable Commander Mahmud, and reached an agreement with them on pursuing the rule of law (*hoquq*) and reforms (*islahat*), and thus united with them in promising to make Xinjiang prosperous (*awat*) by the means of justice (*adalet*) and civilization (*medeniyet*). The new government and administration is safeguarding the political (*sīyasiy*) and cultural (*medeniy*) rights of the people (*khelq*). The whole Uyghur nationality (*pütün Uyghur milliti*) is declaring and confirming their loyalty and diligence, as well as their sincerity and allegiance, to the new government. Now, Mighty God willing, if all nationalities of the Xinjiang district (*wilayet*) want to, according to the principles of unity and justice, submit to the regulations of the republic, they will surely enjoy the generosities (*fazilet*) of civilization (*medeniyet*) and lifelong progress (*tereqqiy*). (NL 9)

New Life contains many other such professions of sincerity in connection with the upcoming implementation of Three People's Principles (NL 3). Xinjiang was perceived as a province firmly integrated into China, the largest country in the world (NL 261). The freedom and fate of Xinjiang was closely bound to that of China (NL 249). The Xinjiang Turkic insurgency, which rightfully ended by

15 This date should be correctly 12th day of the 4th month of the 22nd year AR, i.e. April 12, 1933, when Sheng assumed power in Xinjiang.

Sheng's assumption of power, is interpreted as an integral part of the revolution in the "regions of the entirety of China" (*pütiün Khitay yurtliri*) that had been staged by "supporters of freedom and humanity" (*hürriyet we insaniyet terepdarliri*) and eventually gave birth to the ROC (NL 4). Sun Yat-sen's words were frequently incorporated into patriotic speeches: "Oh nations! Take law and homeland into your own hands!" (NL 9). October 10, the day on which the Chinese republican revolution began in Wuchang in 1911, was celebrated in Sheng's Xinjiang as a holiday equally important to April 12, the commemoration of Sheng's coup. As mentioned before, *New Life* is dated according to the Islamic calendar (AH) as well as the Chinese Republican calendar (AR). The Chinese language was widely recognized in Xinjiang as the "state language" (*dölet tili*; NL 260).

Developmental Breakthroughs by the Sheng Administration

Analogous to defining the political objectives of his government in terms often similar to those of Turkic insurgent nationalists, Sheng also incorporated the ETIR's modernization imperative into his discourse. Progressivism, as such, was in line with the Soviet models used in Central Asia and was also articulated by the last of Sheng's Six Great Policies—*construction*. Sheng had heralded a "new" Xinjiang even prior to his assumption of power in southern Xinjiang. The beginning of the new epoch was symbolically signaled by the change of the newspaper's title from the *Free Turkestan* to the *New Life*. The expression "new" and celebrations of various aspects of the "new life" of Xinjiang are used regularly in the newspaper's texts, sometimes even in the form of poems (NL 2, 4, 6, 57 et al.). The new deal for Xinjiang was also articulated by concepts such as reform, progress, development, uplifting of national status, facilitation of wealth, industry, and prospecting of natural resources (NL 3, 7, 10, 12, 17, 22, 25, 43, 198 et al.). Naturally, all these were to be achieved under the caring patronage of Sheng. Prominent figures of the Urumchi-based authority were also dispatched to the south to initiate modernization in order to make the homeland "prosperous" (*awat*, NL 3). Becoming rich was considered "necessary" (*lazim*; NL 22), while the nationalities of Xinjiang were expected to work in ethnic unity toward "reforms" (*islahat*; NL 7). Sheng's administration was literally called a "period of reform and progress" (*islahat we tereqqiyat dewri*; NL 12). The sources also stated that due to this progress and development, "The Uyghur nationality nowadays is not the same Uyghurs as two years ago. Instead, it is a nationality which is alive and possesses a homeland with a bright future" (NL 10). In other words, progress was seen as an avenue for the Uyghurs to a new life under Sheng (NL 22). Jadidist rhetoric and metaphors of national awakening from

sleep and slumber, calls to activity, or the portrayals of Uyghur daughters at the dawn of the republic also remained in full use (*NL* 9, 13, 14, 19, 52). One article strove to calm down the people of Kashgar after an airplane of the provincial government flew over the city, thus symbolizing the beginning of a new progressive era: "From now on, government airplanes will keep coming. They are our government's airplanes" (*NL* 3). Other articles underlined the civilizing mission of the Han and Chinese administration:

Most of the Hans [living in Xinjiang] are involved in business, some are administrators and officials, and some make a living by growing vegetables. As regards culture (*medeniyet*), the people of Xinjiang, especially Uyghurs, are very backward. To say that ninety-nine percent do not know how to read and write is probably not an exaggeration. The Han are more civilized when compared to others. Even though their script is difficult, there are very few among the Han who do not know how read and write. Also, there are some people among them who have received high education. (*NL* 53)

Despite the official discourse, the Turkic Muslim population and the national leaders' influence on significant political issues of Xinjiang was limited during the initial period of Sheng's rule. In comparison with Yang and Jin's period, Sheng's administration thus did not bring about a substantial change in Xinjiang's political order. Sheng was obviously very well aware that the low cultural level and national decline were among the significant causes of Turkic insurgency. Therefore, his policy strove to accommodate the interests of Uyghurs in places other than the political sphere. In particular, Sheng allowed for a certain degree of cultural autonomy for Xinjiang's fourteen nationalities and, thus, generated some developmental breakthroughs on social and cultural levels. In order to implement cultural autonomy, as well as to ensure that its modalities were in line with provincial policies, in 1934 Sheng established the so-called Enlightenment Association (*Aqartu Uyushma*), a provincial, government-affiliated "academic society" (*ilmiy jemiyet*), which was commissioned primarily with opening schools, publishing periodicals and books, and similar cultural development projects (*NL* 19). In successive steps, the society was expanded in both horizontal and vertical directions—branches of the society were to be launched for each individual nationality of Xinjiang, as well as on district and local levels throughout the province. It is also possible that, due to the fact that the Kashgar branch of the Uyghur Enlightenment Association had probably been founded already under the ETIR, particularly in December 1933

by a group of Soviet-oriented intellectuals (Schleussel 2010, 390), the Cultural Associations network had already been emerging under Soviet guidance before Sheng's assumption of power.

Besides education and publishing, the UEA (elsewhere called the Uyghur Cultural Enlightenment Association, *Uyghur Medeniy Aqartish Uyushmisi*; in Chinese, the Association for the Promotion of Uyghur Culture, 維吾爾文化促進會 *Wéiwú'ěr wénhuà cùjìn huì*) was in charge of other cultural projects, such as organizing Uyghur musical societies and performance venues, theaters, poetry recitations, bookstore openings, reading-rooms, teahouses, cultural clubs, or movie and opera staging (NL 17, 32, 221). These cultural activities were explicitly regarded as a means of stimulating, expressing, and preserving the Uyghur "cultural awareness" (*medeniyhés*) and "national feeling" (*milliy tuyghu*) necessary for existing in a civilized world (NL 26). The UEA took over the publication of the *New Life* in January 1935, although Qutluq Haji Shewqi still remained the editor-in-chief (NL 32: 1). Branches of the UEA were regarded as the hands with which the government took care and supervised the awakening of the "children of the country" (*memliket baliliri*; NL 19, 86: 1).

Under Sheng, healthcare, hospitals, training of physicians, protection of public health, and hygiene also fell under the state's responsibility (NL 2, 16, 27). The UEA both assisted the administration and channeled popular initiatives in founding, financing, or organizing donations for "asylums for the disabled" (*daril'ajizin*), the care of whom was also explicitly linked to national interest and civilization by official discourse (NL 12, 14, 16, 28). Other studies showed that the UEA was also involved in the management of religious endowments, urban planning, trade mediation, and even manufacturing (Schleussel 2009, 391). The respective national enlightenment associations also promoted Sheng's policy of unity and equality of nationalities (NL 25). When reading the *New Life*, Uyghurs were regularly informed that there had been cultural associations established also for the Hans and Tungans (NL 4, 210, 248, 254), whom they had recently hated as mortal enemies. Similarly, extensive reporting on the activities of the Kyrgyz Enlightenment Association in the region (NL 226, 229, 231) likely generated a sense of disunity between the Uyghurs and Kyrgyz, who had only recently been able to unite as East Turkestanis during an anti-Chinese insurgency. In other words, besides patronizing cultural activities, the respective nationalities' Enlightenment Associations were conceived as an effective tool of the government to generate internal tensions within the Xinjiang Turkic population. The UEA was, thus, a very influential new social structure, which oversaw the implementation of Sheng's policies on the lowest social level and also aimed to generate public support for the

government. On the other hand, the UEA also incorporated many nationalist or religious figures and so retained a certain degree of national autonomy over national affairs.

Similar to Turkic nationalist activists, Sheng placed a great emphasis on the promotion of modern education. Again, the education and instruction of children—the future of the nation—was to be carried out exclusively by the state. Construction of an education system and improving knowledge of all Xinjiang nationalities was declared one of the most important objectives of Sheng's government. Importantly, the new education was explicitly intended to be realized in the mother tongue of Xinjiang nationalities (*NL* 3, 17). Education, schools, and teachers were declared indispensable attributes that the respected Uyghur nationality needed for its new life (*NL* 28). The importance of education was also implied by frequent statements that the provincial government had established organs of educational administration and branches of the UEA simultaneously with local people's representative congresses (*NL* 8, 12, 14, 18, 25, 44). The civilizing mission of Sheng's government was to ignite the beacon of learning and to endow the children of the homeland with the virtues of knowledge (*NL* 2: 1). The children of the nation needed to be awakened by education; in contrast, "ignorance" (*gheplet*) and "slumber" (*uyqu*) was said to bring about the danger of national destruction (*NL* 28, 46). A nation without knowledge and education was doomed; therefore, those toiling for education were considered "those doing especially meaningful work for the nationalities of our sacred homeland, East Turkestan" (*NL* 16). Similar to the *Life of East Turkestan* and the *Free Turkestan*, the *New Life* contained an enormous number of references to schools being opened immediately after Sheng's takeover of Kashgar (*NL* 5, 7, 8, 15 et al.). The new schools were being established in such haste that sometimes they were *ad hoc* based in temporary locations, such as a military commander's office (*NL* 8). There were also repeated mentions in the *New Life* of donations to schools by prominent Uyghur collaborators with Sheng's government (*NL* 8, 9). Schools were sometimes followed by the founding of facilities for the disadvantaged (*NL* 33). Importantly, the schools provided for learning the Chinese language (*NL* 64). This new education was of course to remain in accordance with religious principles; at the same time, it was ostentatiously granted to girls and women (*NL* 8, 11):

We will act in the way that abides by the Holy Qur'an given to us by Righteous God. All the boys and girls of our homeland will go to school, and we will give them education and schooling. It was said that we will make it compulsory for both Muslim boys and girls to study in accordance with the Holy *Qur'an* and the *Hadith*. (3)

Sheng's administration also embraced other institutes of modernity. Freedoms of expression and the press were claimed to be two of the most important directives of the new government (NL 3), equally as important as education (NL 5). Publishing and printing were said to be fully transferred to the hands of the people so that books on religion, literature, history, and politics could be published, and bookstores and reading rooms opened (NL 12). Sheng also continued the trend of vernacularization of printed matter and public affairs. The time was regarded as ripe for the ancient and elite Uyghur language to regain its lost status (NL 91), so use of the vernacular was explicitly supported (NL 14, 210). Gradually, the *New Life* started to contain a regular Uyghur literary section, the "Literature Garden" (*Edebiyat Baghchisi*). Sun Yat-sen's works were to be translated into the Uyghur language (NL 9), and Uyghurs could even appeal to the government in Uyghur language and script, which made Uyghur an official language of the province (NL 51). Analogously, use of the mother language and script was also propagandized to the other Turkic nationalities with the covert aim of weakening the united Turkic identity. A good example of the vernacularization propaganda can be seen in the following excerpt:

What does it mean to be a Uyghur? Uyghurs are a civilized nation living in cities. Our fathers and grandfathers have lived in a civilized way. In later years, we have lived under tyranny, forgotten who we were and thus left the ranks of human beings (*insan*). Now, we have discovered our name, so let us also find the previous civilized existence of ours. Let us put into use our vanished Uyghur language (*lughet*)¹⁶ and recall our impressive Uyghur pronunciation (*ahang*), so that we can recall our previous existence. As much as possible, let every word we use be Uyghur (*Uyghurche bolsun*). Particularly, let our own Uyghur mother tongue (*öz ana tilimiz Uyghur tilliri*) be taught in our newly opened schools. Let our poems and dialect be as Uyghur as possible. In this way, our Uyghur language and dialect will not disappear. (NL 25)

At the same time, vernacularization of public life during Sheng's renewed heteronomy resulted in an increased usage of administration-related Chinese words in Uyghur language, such as *siling* (a commander, 司令), *shīzhǎng* (a division commander, 師長), *Mínzhòng liánhéhuì* (People's United Congress,

16 In a heated appeal to use Uyghur vernacular, this word is somewhat ironic—*lughet* is a loanword from Arabic with the original meaning "language," which, in modern Uyghur language, has acquired the meaning of "dictionary." Here, however, it is used in the original sense of "language."

民眾聯合會), *dūbàn* (a commissioner, 督辦), *xíngzhèngzhǎng* (head of administration, 行政張), *zhǔxí* (chairman, 主席), *fùzhǔxí* (vice-chairman, 副主席), *xíngzhèngfǔ* (government, 行政府), *dà zǒngtǒng* (great president, 大總統), *gōngān jú* (public security bureau, 公安局), *júzhǎng* (a bureau director, 局長), and *shéngpiào* (provincial banknote, 省票). On the other hand, words for new technology and institutions continued to come from Russian, which reflected the growing Soviet influence in the region, for example, *ayroplan* (airplane), *tilifon* (telephone), *tiligraf* (telegraph), *tiligram* (telegram), *gramafon* (gramophone), *aftamobil* (automobile), *pilimot* (submachine gun), *ayroplan bombiliri* (airplane bombs), *konstitutsiye* (Constitution), *militarism* (militarism), *doktur* (doctor), *zawut* (factory), *mashina* (machine), *konsulat* (consulate), *banka* (bank), or *frasant* (percent). The loanwords were sometimes explained in Uyghur language in parentheses after the loanword; thus, feudalism (*feudalizm*) became “individual rulers” (*shekhsiy hakimlar*; NL 3) and an agriculture specialist (*agronom*) became “a scholar of crops” (*zira’et alimi*; NL 8). The number of Persisms and Arabisms was substantially reduced in the *New Life* in comparison with insurgent publications. The newspaper occasionally reported on events in Islamic or third world countries, such as Egypt, Iraq, Hijaz, Afghanistan, Abyssinia, and Tibet, but predominantly brought news from European countries such as England, Spain, Sweden, Austria, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Bulgaria. A piece of news from Czechoslovakia in 1935, for instance, announced that ethnic clashes erupted between Czech and German students at Prague University (*medrise jame’e*), itself a very old university founded by Charles IV in 1348, and the police had to be called in to restore order (NL 33). Due to Sheng’s anti-imperialism, close attention was paid to events in Germany, Italy, Turkey, and Japan. The fact that Xinjiang was becoming a sphere of exclusive Soviet influence at the time could not be deduced at all from the *New Life* articles, and even news from the Soviet Union was not very frequent. In fact, one contemporary Western traveler’s report related the conspicuous absence of Soviet propaganda in the province at the time (Hedin 1938, 186).

On the factual level, Sheng’s administration did indeed achieve some significant developmental breakthroughs. The policy of construction brought about material improvements. For example, mechanization was introduced into farming and pasturage; factories and manufacturing plants were launched, which brought modern technology; an oilfield was opened at Dushanzi (獨山子); a strategically crucial road from Urumchi to Ghulja by the Soviet border was built; and medical facilities and healthcare were established. Again, due to China’s war with Japan—and Soviet and U.S. involvement in it—Sheng’s Xinjiang became a pivot of complex geopolitical relations (Ezizi

1997a, 321–22; Du 1938, 85–91; Norins 1944, 105–20, 124–40; Lattimore 1950, 154, 170–81, 200–22). Therefore, the initial phase of Sheng’s rule has been termed a “progressive period” (Forbes 1986, 152), and the central government in Nanking constructed a positive image of Sheng’s administration for the Han readership in inner China (Du 1938).

Sheng’s cultural autonomy, indigenization, and affirmative action also triggered some breakthroughs in Xinjiang indigenous society. As regards national education in general, the below table shows the impact of Sheng’s policy by comparing the number of schools established by the Enlightenment Associations (listed as “EA Schools” and “EA Students”) of individual Xinjiang nationalities to the number of schools run by the provincial government (listed as “Provincial Schools” and “Provincial Students”):

TABLE 3.2 *Number of Xinjiang schools, 1934–42*

Year	Provincial Schools	Provincial Students	EA Schools	EA Students	XJ Total Schools	XJ Total Students
1934	124	11,313	1,000	19,991	1,124	31,304
1935	135	15,464	1,045	39,966	1,180	55,430
1936	155	22,145	1,055	59,949	1,210	82,094
1937	215	33,054	1,300	79,932	1,515	112,986
1938	357	36,575	1,400	99,915	1,757	136,490
1939	393	49,867	1,800	119,898	2,193	169,765
1940	433	58,991	1,820	139,881	2,253	198,872
1941	545	82,806	1,830	159,864	2,375	242,670
1942	580	91,065	1,883	180,035	2,463	271,100

Zhou 2001, 317

As regards the UEA in particular, there were allegedly 1980 UEA-run schools with 129,640 students in Xinjiang in 1936 (Du 1938, 82), while 12,827 Uyghur students studied in government-run elementary schools in 1938, and 104,658 Uyghurs attended literacy courses by June 1941 (Janishif 2001, 140–43). According to another figure, there were 1,540 UEA-run Uyghur schools with 89,804 students in the province in 1938 (Zhou 2001, 316). Although these statistics do not mutually corroborate themselves, it cannot be disputed that the

outreach of the UEA was so substantial that schools established during the Sheng era bred generations of Uyghur elites who continue to have an impact on Uyghur society today (Talip 1998, 129–150; Schleussel 2010, 394–99). There were also several schools and vocational institutes established throughout the province that were directly administered by the Soviet Union, such as one pilot training institute in Urumchi (Hedin 1938, 158). Since 1934, hundreds of Uyghur students were sent to study at schools in Tashkent (at the Administration and Law Faculty of the Central Asian University, *Ottura Asiya Universitetining Memuriy Hoquq Fakulteti*), Chimkent, Samarkand, Almaty, and other places in Soviet Central Asia (Janishif 2001, 144–45; Schleussel 2009, 393–94). Although direct indoctrination by communism was reportedly not part of the curriculum for Xinjiang Uyghurs in Soviet Central Asia (Ezizi 1997a, 449, 473), all of the 1930s' Uyghur students encountered socialist ideology during their studies, and some became strongly influenced by it, as became obvious in the following decade (researched in Chapter 4).

Uyghur national publishing also experienced rapid development during Sheng's rule. The Uyghur mutation of the provincial newspaper the *Xinjiang Daily* (*Xinjiang Géziti*, 新疆日報 *Xīnjiāng rìbào*) was published in six major locations besides Urumchi (Du 1938, 84). The editor-in-chief for the most prestigious Urumchi edition was Meshur Roziev, a Soviet Uyghur serving as an advisor to Khoja Niyaz Haji, and the *Xinjiang Daily* was highly instrumental in disseminating the newly created Uyghur standard language (Kamalov 2006, 30). Other Uyghur periodicals were also published, often under the auspices of the UEA, such as *New Xinjiang* (*Yéngi Xinjiang*) in Urumchi or *Sieve* (*Ghelwir*) in Aksu (Mekit 1999, 152; Esqeri 1995, 295). These and other similar developments inspired a true “wave of cultural enlightenment” (*medeniyet aqartish dolquni*; Janishif 2001, 192) and a boom of cultural activities, such as theater, music, arts, and motion picture projections (Ezizi 1997a, 498–500).

In regards to the intensity of the social penetration of Sheng's concept of Uyghur nationality, foreign travelers to Xinjiang around the mid-1930s mention this phenomenon rather rarely in their reports and memoirs. British diplomat Sir Eric Teichman travelled through Urumchi in 1935 and noted that in official circles, the local Turki population was not called by the local slang expression *Chantou* anymore but instead by the name “Uyghur,” according to pre-Mongol rulers of the region (Teichman 1988, 187–88). Swiss reporter Ella Maillart jotted down a rumor overheard in Kashgar in 1935 that the Soviet Union might be considering the creation a “Uyghur Socialist Republic” in Xinjiang (Maillart 2003, 260). But several other reports from the period do not mention the contemporary Turki population being customarily known as or referring to

themselves by the term “Uyghur” (Fleming 1936; Hedin 1936; Hedin 1938; Wu 1940; Hedin 2009; Gablenz 1942). This suggests that the idea of Uyghur nationality spread throughout Yettishahr rather gradually.

Nevertheless, Sheng’s official policy of creating a modern Uyghur nationality obviously did have an impact among the Turkic intellectual elite perceptions of communal identity and interest. For instance, the fact that the *New Life*, once a proindependence Turkic nationalist periodical, promptly introduced the discourse on the Uyghur nationality sharing its Xinjiang homeland with other brotherly nationalities (or possibly was “advised” to introduce this discourse by a government or security official), and that Memtili Tewpiq, an activist influenced by Turkish nationalism, disseminated the idea of Uyghur national identity in his schools (mentioned in the preceding chapter), indicates that at least some Xinjiang Turkic strata accepted Sheng’s ethnic theory. The relatively quick social penetration of Sheng’s concept into the Xinjiang intellectual milieu will be further discussed in the following chapter. It is worth noting here that with the exception of Taranchis, who are today considered by the PRC as part of the Uyghurs, the fourteen Xinjiang nationalities delimited by Sheng exist within unchanged ethnic boundaries even today.

On the other hand, further developments in Xinjiang suggest that Sheng’s adoption of the ETIR’s discourse of national identity and national interest, the development of the concepts of Xinjiang nationalities and their national symbologies, espousal of their national interests, and other affirmative steps towards their identities were legitimization measures, likely adopted in order to guarantee a smooth consolidation of power during the initial stage of his rule. Eventually, Sheng commenced the second stage of his policy. As mentioned above, he gradually abandoned the discourse of individual Xinjiang nationalities. Later issues of *New Life*—before its termination in May 1937—do not speak of Uyghurs and other respective nationalities of Xinjiang. Instead, they refer to the population by the generic keyword “Xinjiang nationalities” (*Xinjiang milletliri*) without any specification of their ethnicity. After indigenization, the ethnic identities of Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, and all other nationalities were generally ignored, and safeguarding interests of Xinjiang nationalities did not constitute the most important mission of Sheng’s government anymore. This naturally led to an erosion of trust in Sheng’s administration by the indigenous Turkic population, as can be inferred by the increased frequency of the government’s condemnations of disunity and treachery in later issues of the *New Life*. At the same time, it was the struggle against “imperialism” (*jahangirlik*, *imperyalism*) that gradually became the top priority of the provincial government (*NL* 193). In relation to this ideological line, an influential body used to mobilize popular support for Sheng’s policy was (with Soviet assistance) established under the name the Anti-Imperialist

Association (*Jahangirlikke Qarshi Uyushmisi*, 反帝會 *Fǎndì huì*; Ezizi 1997a, 376, 466). Another good example of the late phase of Sheng's policy is the fierce condemnation of the nationalist leader Mahmud Muhiti, which was posted publicly on the streets of Kashgar after Muhiti fled to India due to his fears of getting arrested by Sheng in early April 1937 (Forbes 1986, 142). The document still voiced professions of equality and endorsements of the rights of nationalities, religious freedom, founding modern schools, and other above-described institutes of representative government and modernity. It even used the term "East Turkestan" for Xinjiang. But it also contained strong criticism of the popular hero who wielded enormous influence over the local Turkic population. The pamphlet also portrayed the ETIR as an institution, which violated the sacred unity of nationalities by discriminating against the Hans and which sought to bring Xinjiang under the colonial domination of foreign imperialists (PFK 1937, 10).

A major uprising which erupted in the spring of 1937 once again threw all of southern Xinjiang into turmoil. This time, the Turkic armed resistance to Sheng's policies, which were centered in Kashgar, was reinforced by the Tungsans, who had controlled the southeastern rim of the Taklamakan since 1934. By fall 1937, Sheng managed (again with massive Soviet military assistance, allegedly including tanks and gas bombs) to crush the insurgency. By annexing the former Tungan enclave, Sheng Shicai finally brought the entire territory of Xinjiang under his control. Subsequently, he embarked on a draconian campaign to consolidate his power. Also modeled largely on the Soviet model of Stalin's purges in the late 1930s, Sheng eliminated all other significant power holders in the province and instituted a strongly totalitarian rule. He executed a major portion of the Turkic nationalist and progressive elite remaining in Xinjiang, including Memtili Tewpiq, Heyder Sayrani, Qutluq Haji Shewqi, Khoja Niyaz Haji, Yunus Beg, and Tahir Beg, as well as many less well-known people. According to one source, the victims of Sheng's atrocities totaled over 100,000 people (Ezizi 1997a, 349–62; Millward 2007, 210). In the cities, Sheng also intensified openly anti-religious efforts, such as the closure or conversion of mosques into theaters and clubs and the encouragement for men to drink liquor and for women to appear unveiled in public (Forbes 1986, 137). Although the Soviet Union was not interested in direct communization or annexation of Xinjiang, and although there were no obvious signs of the province actually being under the USSR's control, Sheng's later policies strongly resembled Stalin's totalitarian measures. Thus, after the bloody and protracted insurgency of the early 1930s, followed by a brief period of autonomy during the ETIR and a promisingly affirmative beginning to Sheng's regime in 1934–37, Xinjiang Turkic Muslims (who in the meantime came to be called Uyghurs) once again wound up under despotic Chinese heteronomy:

People's congresses and enlightenment unions, which were theoretically people's organizations, were established in Turkestan. False propaganda, such as "we have allowed education," "we have abolished dictatorship," or "all nationalities have obtained equal rights" was disseminated. Regrettably, this was trickery. The secret police kept putting people into prisons and killing them. The stench of death could be smelled all over Turkestan. A person who would be soundly asleep one night would be gone by the next night, and even if his children and wife knew where he disappeared to, they would not say a word to anyone. Most people were deprived of rights and knowledge. All that was left to them was fear. (Wahidi 1938, 19)

The latter phase of Sheng's ethnic policy also bore a striking and probably deliberate resemblance to Soviet nationality theory and practice. In the Soviet Union, affirmative action toward the establishment of national identities actually aimed at their eventual obliteration. Soviet ethno-engineers based this seemingly paradoxical and contradictory strategy on the assumption that once national identity and rights were granted to Soviet ethnic groups, these would eventually give up their national loyalties voluntarily. It was expected that due to the common economic interests of all classes, the population would forge a unified socialist people, the *homo sovieticus*, who would by themselves come to ignore the internal national boundaries within the Soviet Union. In the words of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, vertical national differences, possibly also all distinctions, were to utterly disappear because the most significant social distinctions were horizontal (i.e., among the classes). The amalgamation of nations (*sliyanie narodov*) was technically a process of uniting several equal elements into a single whole and was, therefore, different from the assimilation of an inferior group by a superior one. In this way, Soviet republics and autonomous units would remain national in form but socialist in content (Connor 1984, 8, 52, 202; Martin 2001, 182; Roy 2005, viii; Wimbush 1985, 73; Bruchis 1984, 132; Soucek 2000, 222–24, 232). In Soviet society, a brotherhood of nationalities was the classic socialist metaphor of an imagined multinational community (Martin 2001, 432–33) and was also one of the most prominent characteristics of a communist society, as articulated by Leonid Brezhnev (in power 1964–82) in 1972:

A great brotherhood of people of labor, people who are united, regardless of national origin, by a community of class interests and goals, has come into being and has gained strength in our country; it has developed relations unprecedented in history, relations that we can rightfully call the Leninist friendship of peoples. (Connor 1984, 478)

Thus, the position of national identity in Soviet theory and practice was ambiguous. On the one hand, the society and polity was overtly referred to as multinational, and nationalism had been utilized during the earlier stage in order to gain support of a nationally aware population for the supranational socialist movement. On the other hand, the same nationalism would eventually be regarded by Soviet ideologues as something incompatible with socialism and communism, and therefore, outright reactionary and in need of annihilation. Similarly, the peoples' slogan of self-determination was "designed to recruit ethnic support for the revolution, not to provide a model for the governing a multiethnic state" (Martin 2001, 2). There was also a stark difference between the technical *right to self-determination* of the Soviet peoples and *the right to exercise this right* (Connor 1984, 52). During his purges in the 1930s, Stalin attempted to solve the national question, i.e. "the entire network of problems arising from the existence of nations and nationalities" (Connor 1984, xv) by decimating the elites of numerous Soviet nationalities, allegedly on charges of nationalist deviations. At the same time, it was the Russians who were later to become the first among equals and to play a decisive role in a multinational Soviet state where all nationalities theoretically enjoyed the same rights (Martin 2001, 451–61; Connor 1984, 254–63).

Future research will hopefully reveal what were the specific means, processes, and degrees to which Sheng Shicai adopted Soviet principles of delimitation of nationalities, affirmative action, indigenization, cultural autonomy, formal political autonomy, and other policies that reveal clear Soviet handwriting. The gradual shift in the wording of articles in the *New Life* (from references to Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Taranchis, Uzbeks, Tatars, and other nationalities right after the consolidation of Sheng's power in Kashgar in early 1934 to *nationalities of Xinjiang united in friendship* in late 1936 and early 1937) suggests that Sheng's measures were arguably intended to follow the whole course of Soviet ethnic policy, taking initial affirmative action towards ethnic identity with the aim of their eventual eradication.¹⁷ As mentioned above, Sheng's unity of nationalities obviously did not point to a transstate political unity of Turkic peoples, but instead, to the unity of all Xinjiang nationalities with each other, with the provincial government, and with the ROC. The texts from right before the discontinuation of the *New Life* in 1937 suggest that by including disparate, Turkic and non-Turkic, Muslim and non-Muslim, and settled and

17 In northern Xinjiang, where the population was composed of several Turkic nationalities (among other ethnic groups), the trend of converging multiethnic identity was, to a certain degree, natural, as evinced by the existence of a Turkic "common language" (*ortaq til*) used in publications in Chöchek since the late 1930s (Ezizi 1997a, 500–1; Tashbayof 2001, 58–59). This practice is also reminiscent of a unified script in the ETIR sources.

non-settled ethnic groups into the deethnicized concept of “fourteen nationalities of Xinjiang,” Sheng perhaps intended to replace ethnic criteria of identification with political ones and create a nonethnic category, *homo sin-kiangensis*. Thus, apart from the fact that Sheng’s delimitation of fourteen Xinjiang nationalities survives in much the same shape today, his other ways of dealing with the plaguing nationality question eventually proved to be forerunners to events that took place in Xinjiang in the following decade, as well as to the CPC’s ethnic policy, which has been enforced in the region since 1949. One final excerpt that is illustrative of the future direction of Xinjiang ethnic policy is from Sheng’s speech, recorded in 1934:

To honour the memory of September 18,¹⁸ we must do our best to defend the whole province of Sinkiang, its privileges, and territories and firmly to unite all the different races, attack the Imperialists, and recapture all the territory they had taken from us. If all the different races are to be welded together into a firm whole, they must be placed on the same level and treated in the same way. When this has been done, it does not matter what secret conspiracies Imperialism directs against Sinkiang, for we shall be able to crush them. We must be resolutely on our guard every moment against the Imperialists and give the *one* answer only: that is, *blood*. Down with Imperialism! (Hedin 1938, 198)

3.3 Chapter Summary

This extensive chapter traced several important developments in the discourse of East Turkestani and the Uyghur nation and national interest throughout the 1930s. Both factual events and written sources from this decade suggest that the recently established social stratum of progressive intellectuals, teachers, philanthropists, merchants, and other enlighteners did succeed in their national agitation, to a certain degree. The preceding call to national awakening articulated by a nationally conscious intelligentsia mobilized national activists, who formulated an eloquent rhetoric of nation and its interest. Apart from national agitation and the cultivation of nationally conscious individuals, Xinjiang Turkic progressive intelligentsia also directly and efficiently partici-

18 This date referred to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, after which Sheng Shicai, who had been a military commander of northeastern China, was forced to flee with his troops via the Soviet Union to Xinjiang.

pated in the political movement throughout the 1930s, acquiring a strong presence in the insurgent administration and Sheng's subsequent administration.

The above chapter also exposed a phenomenon, which can be tentatively termed *fragmented nationalism*—a situation that occurs when nationally minded intelligentsia are fragmented into several groups that still articulate a similar discourse of nation and national interest despite being allied with disparate, even conflicting, political movements or agendas. Although some of their political objectives may vary, all groups tacitly agree that they are a part of the same nation and pursue similar political objectives. Namely, in spite of the obviously differing primary political goals of the Turkic insurgency and Sheng's administration, nation workers and activists' within the two movements articulated a mutually compatible discourse of nation and national interest for Xinjiang Turkic Muslims throughout the 1930s. Both sets of ideologies defined nation—precisely stated, the “East Turkestani nation” during the insurgency and the “Uyghur nation” under renewed heteronomy—by a multitude of similar national attributes. While some of these attributes were merely intercepted from previously existing concepts of communal identity with the same or modified degree of importance, other national symbols and traditions were invented, reconstructed, or reimagined. The concept of an “East Turkestani nation,” for which, so far, no evidence predating the 1930s can be found in indigenous sources, became the key construct of the Xinjiang Turkic Muslim communal identity discourse and state practice during the insurgency. Similarly, in order to facilitate his own political goals and legitimize his rule after taking over Xinjiang, Sheng adopted the concept of an East Turkestani nation and reframed it in “Uyghur” terms, thus establishing a term which had been until then known only to a very modest progressive stratum of Xinjiang Turkic society. He subsequently took up a complex plan of affirmative action toward implanting the construct into the mindset of southern Xinjiang settled Turks, including the construction of national attributes and the incorporation of Uyghur national figures into the provincial power apparatus. Both the insurgent and Sheng's administration acknowledged and even stressed Turkic origins of the nation and desired to restore the grandeur of its ancient culture and civilization. Similarly, the invention by the respective political agencies of previously nonexistent variations of the concept of national homeland (particularly of East Turkestan, Uyghuristan, and Xinjiang as a part of China) enabled the historical justification of the nationalist movement's claim of sovereignty over its territory. Nationalist activists also performed a complex restoration and redefinition of traditional concepts from mythology, historiographies, memories of past statehood, ancient culture, material artifacts, and other motifs into characteristics of modern East Turkestani and the Uyghur nation.

A new national history was also drawn up and a whole new “ancient” heritage of a “primordial” nation emerged. A vital element in the discourse of the national past was the memory of *national decline* and *national misery* caused in the past by the mismanagement of East Turkestani and the Uyghur homeland by flawed Chinese administrations. Also, Muhemmed Imin Bughra’s *History of East Turkestan* was the first modern Xinjiang Turkic history that discarded the traditional religious lens of classical Turko-Islamic historiography and instead narrated East Turkestanis’ historical past from the so-called “enlightenment perspective” (Duara 1995, 33–34), as a struggle of a nation to liberate itself from dark oppression and, by reviving its ancient splendor, to attain the light of progress facilitated by a modern nation-state. To borrow an apt formulation used by a scholar researching the construction of a national history narrative in China proper, Bughra did not narrate the history of East Turkestan evangelically, or down time, but reconstructed it as the *History of East Turkestan* “up time,” all the way from the modern era to ancient times, lit by modern archeology. Instead of resorting to the usual nationalist tactic of claiming that his nation “forgot” their national history, Bughra ingeniously posited that East Turkestanis were forcefully prevented from remembering and speaking of their past by their oppressive overlords.

By constructing a national past, Bughra and other Xinjiang Turkic thinkers linked their efforts to a long and legitimate tradition of opposition to alien power. At the same time, the newly devised concept of a troubled, yet common past was to reassure the sense of national identity, stimulate people’s craving for reassertion of past national rights, and thus, facilitate the return to a *status quo ante* loss of national independence. The subsequent natural and legitimate national movement and nationalist insurgency were hence interpreted as a dramatic national destiny. Although the conceptualization of the East Turkestani or Uyghur nation was a newly devised social practice, and a national history was an innovative cultural structure, the nation and all of its attributes were interpreted by the nationalists as primordial and selfsame. In the same way, although the East Turkestani flag (blue with a star and a crescent) was only adopted in 1933, it was explicitly called ancient. Similarly, newly invented symbolic actions, such as invoking a tradition of resistance to heteronomy (such as a history of national liberation struggle), glorification of remarkable revolutionary figures (such as Khoja Niyaz Haji or Mahmud Muhiti), public celebration of state holidays (such as the date of Sheng’s coup) and other important identity events (such as using the Islamic calendar or celebrating Islamic holidays), communal care for important identity sites (such as appeals for keeping clean the Eid Kah mosque or cherishing of the ancient and famed city of Kashgar), use of a national language in administration (as in the emergence of

national publishing), and similar acts of the *national ritual* were all targeted towards fortification of newly devised “primordial” national identities.

Besides engaging in a rich discourse of national characteristics, and thus stimulating the centripetal community principle of a national identity for Xinjiang Turkic Muslims, nationalist theoreticians and officials of the 1930s also coherently expressed their visions of interest for the newly delimited East Turkestani and Uyghur nation. Politicization of that national movement meant that from the early 1930s the primary objectives of national movement were seen *in the sphere of politics*. For obvious reasons, the political interests of the two administrations differed markedly. For the Turkic insurgency and policy-making circles of the ETIR, the highest political ideal was an independent nation-state. In contrast, Sheng strove to counter the secessionist drive by propagandizing the unity of Xinjiang nationalities with each other, with the provincial government, and with the ROC. On the other hand, both the discourse of the Turkic insurgency and Sheng’s indigenization project similarly embraced representative government, national sovereignty, republicanism, rule of law, morally justified governance, equality of its citizens, civil rights, and other principles as basic tenets of their administration. As a result, from the early 1930s all members of the East Turkestani and Uyghur nation were—in the theoretical discourse of the progressive national intelligentsia—considered citizens of a state with equal political, religious, cultural, and national rights.

This chapter termed another set of national interests articulated by the Turkic insurgency and Sheng’s affirmative action the *modernization imperative*—the nation’s unconditional demand for modernization and progress. Both powers exerted a concerted effort to establish national education by creating a modern and standardized school system. In an extension of the Jadidist educational movement taken up by individual enlightened activists from the 1880s throughout the 1920s, the progress of schools in the 1930s could be seen as an indicator of the degree of national progress and nationalist movement, as well as an avenue to national well-being. Secular education can be regarded as a universal feature of modern society, in which every member of society has access to literacy and knowledge, which had been monopolized by certain elites (in the Xinjiang Islamic clergy) in the premodern religious and imperial world order. Thus, the preceding boom of private modern schools greatly improved the mobility, communication, and transmission of ideas among members of the nationally conscious intelligentsia and strongly contributed to the spread of the nationalist movement. But in contrast to early educational efforts taken up by individual activists, often in direct conflict with the state, in the 1930s Xinjiang Turkic education became *intertwined with state*

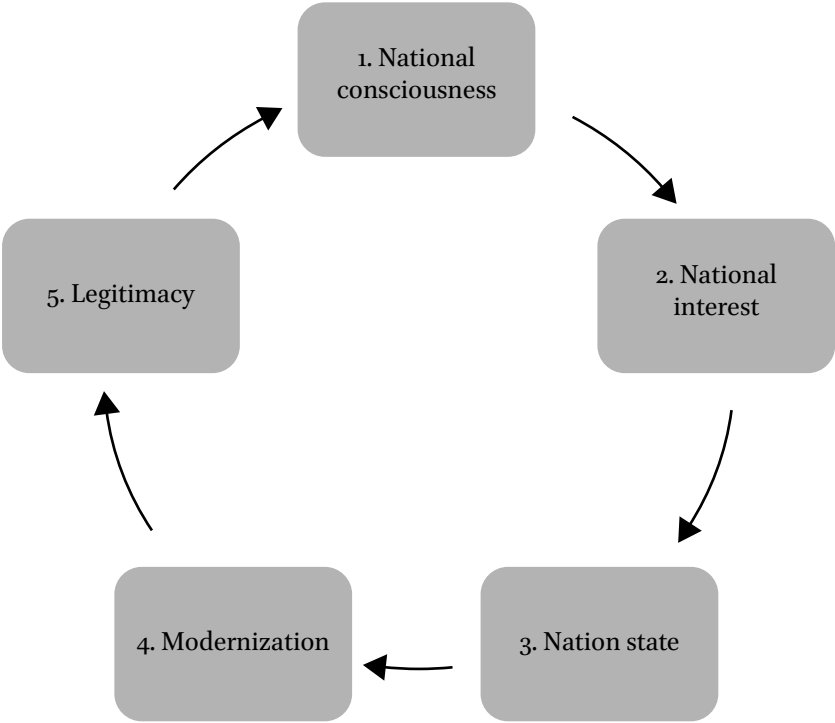
power. The control and operation of education was one of the means by which the nation-state disseminated the principles of its ideology and fortified the national identity of its citizens, on whose support it depended. It was of vital interest in a modern state to facilitate the education of the common populace. At the same time, by quenching the people's craving for modern education and knowledge, the state further legitimized its existence and, in turn, created a need for more modern education and knowledge. In effect, the nation-state's taking up the overwhelming portion of the national education responsibility, as well as allowing for or financially supporting the nonstate schools that fostered a national identity, turned education into a structure that made the nation and the nation-state interdependent on each other.

An analogous interrelation emerged among other aspects of modernity. In order to strengthen people's sense of national identity and popular support for state administration, both the East Turkestani nation-state and Sheng's multinational heteronomy recognized the need to launch a national publication enterprise and introduce the vernacular into public discourse and state practice. The state specifically made itself responsible for facilitating these national interests, which in turn led to growth in public support for the state, as well as to an increased need for the promotion of modernity and progress. The systematic vernacularization of publishing and an official intercourse, which had been commenced by national agitators in the previous period, underlined the national language as one of the nation's most iconic attributes. Through vernacularization, the nation-state aimed at engendering cultural and social homogeneity, which was in turn instrumental for the state in creating an impression of equal status among all members of the nation. Beyond the discourse arena, some of the modernization imperatives did occur, to a certain degree, in spheres of education, publishing, infrastructure construction, industry, agriculture, resource exploitation, healthcare, and foreign policy.

Compared to the 1910s and 1920s, the 1930s witnessed a shift in the Xinjiang Turkic intelligentsia's rhetoric of nation and national interest. Since this decade, the intellectuals viewed their community as a nation endowed with the full scale of national attributes, such as homeland, ethnic origin, culture, language, history, heroes, rituals, and symbols. The strengthening of communal identity in the form of national consciousness led to *politicization of national interest*, namely to demands for the highest possible degree of national self-determination—a *nation-state*. The state was then entrusted with following the modernization imperative, such as founding representative government, facilitating modernity, and attaining material prosperity. Successful implementation of the modernization imperative would in turn strengthen the nation-state's legitimacy in front of the nation, and thus, secondarily the citizens' national consciousness. The intensified national consciousness would then

lead to a continued or even strengthened national interest. Through strengthened national interests, the nation-state would be able to generate even more legitimacy for itself and a continuation of the citizens' national consciousness. This cyclical reproductive relationship, in which the emergence of national consciousness leads to the formulation of national interest, which leads to the founding of a nation-state, which leads to implementation of the modernization imperative, which leads to an increase in the nation-state's legitimacy, which leads to a strengthening of national consciousness, which leads to the duration of national interest, and so on, can be expressed by the following diagram:

TABLE 3.3 *Interrelation of national consciousness, nation-state, and the modernization imperative*



Author: Ondřej Klimeš

The above-outlined intertwining of East Turkestani and the Uyghur intellectual national consciousness and national interest with statecraft in the 1930s is one fundamental change from perceptions of community and its interests

in the late imperial and early Republican era examined in the previous chapter. Whereas the preceding cultural agitation called on Uyghur descendants to strive to attain the cultural national interest by themselves, the discourse of the politicized national movement called on the East Turkestani and the Uyghur nation to rebel and to establish their own *nation-state* or *representative government*, which they were to entrust with fulfilling the modernization imperative *for them*. Due to the improved means of communication, the emergence of schools, cultural associations, printed media, public dimension of statecraft, and other nascent social phenomena, the practice of nation and nationalism penetrated Xinjiang settled Turkic Muslim society to a much wider and deeper extent in the 1930s than in the previous era. In assessing the social penetration of East Turkestani/Uyghur intellectual ideas of nation and nationalism, this research is limited by the lack of reliable data produced by systematic contemporary field research. However, the next chapter illustrates that the concepts of East Turkestani and Uyghur nation and national interest continued to play a decisive role in the thinking of Xinjiang Turkic elites and that these concepts markedly evolved as a result of the altered geopolitical position of Xinjiang within the ROC and the evolution of the Soviet Union international interests in the 1940s.

The Significance of a National Boundary in Flux (1930s and 1940s)

This chapter considers the transformation of the discourse of the East Turkestani nation and national interest in a new geopolitical context: Xinjiang's *de facto* submission to the jurisdiction of the ROC's central government between 1944 and 1949. The first section of this chapter concentrates on the ideology of Turkic activists, politicians, and intellectuals associated with the KMT. These figures were first active in the 1930s, while being affiliated with the central government in Nanking, and formulated their ideas of nation and national interest in a periodical, the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* (*Chiniy Türkistan Awazi*; VCT). After the central government restored its authority in Xinjiang in the early 1940s, several of these activists assumed high posts in the provincial apparatus and were thus able to promote national consciousness to their fellow Turkic nationals, as well as to vie for Turkic national interests at the provincial and central level. Sources such as Mes'ud Sabiri's *A Speech* (*Bir Nutuq*) and *Awareness of Being a Turk* (*Türklük Oranı*), Muhemmed Imin Bughra's *Struggle by the Pen for the Homeland and the Nation* (*Yurt we Millet Heqqide Qelem Kürishi*), and Polat Qadiri's *Slogan of Freedom* (*Erk Shoari*) and *Provincial History* (*Ölke Tarikhi*) reveal that the altered geopolitical situation coerced their authors to reevaluate the importance of the East Turkestani's national boundary and national interest. A structurally similar reevaluation occurred in the discourse of ideologists who performed nation work during a revolutionary movement, which erupted in northern Xinjiang's three northern districts simultaneously with the KMT's takeover of the province in the fall of 1944. The movement proclaimed a second East Turkestan Republic (ETR) in November 1944 that remained independent from the provincial government until 1949. Texts spawned by this insurgency, namely the *Revolutionary East Turkestan* (*Inqilabiy Sherqi Türkistan*) and three other sources examined in this research, reveal that their authors formulated concepts of a Uyghur national boundary and national interest that were also potently shaped by the altered geopolitical position of the rebellious northern Xinjiang.

4.1 Republican Turkic Nationalism (1930s–49)

After Sheng Shicai terminated his affirmative action and staged his great purge in 1937, he upheld the pro-Soviet orientation of his policy. He also allowed cadres of the CPC, which had encamped in Yan'an in the Shaanxi province after the traumatizing Long March (長征 *Chángzhēng*; 1934–35), to take up advisory positions in the Xinjiang administration. But in 1941, after the Soviets signed a nonaggression pact with Japan, after Germany invaded the Soviet Union, and after the U.S. had joined the war in the Pacific against Japan, Sheng switched sides and initiated rapprochement with Chiang Kai-shek, executing all CPC cadres and severing all ties to the Soviet Union. The first KMT office in Urumchi was established in January 1943, and later that year, the first U.S. consulate opened in the city. The KMT continued moving into the province even after Sheng once again attempted to restore the alliance with the Soviets in 1943. He failed and was forced by Chiang to give up his provincial post in September 1944. Thus, for the first time since the birth of the ROC on January 1, 1912, the central government was able to assert its authority over Xinjiang (Ezizi 1997a, 389–90; Forbes 1986, 157–62; Millward 2007, 210–11).

Reintegrating Xinjiang under ROC's central government was a culmination of the KMT's complex effort to regain control over the spacious northwest ruled by warlords and military cliques since the fall of the empire. Ever since the proclamation of the Nationalist government in 1925 in Canton and the capture of Beijing in 1928, the KMT party-state presented itself as a nationalistic authority that was determined to reunify the vast territory and numerous ethnocultural groups and lands, such as Tibet or Outer Mongolia, inherited by the republic from the Qing dynasty. This aspiration was also directed toward numerous warlord-controlled regions within the interior and along China's borderlands. This objective gained even more importance after the military incursion of Japan into northeastern and eastern China in the early 1930s. At that moment, the northwest started to be considered by the KMT policy-makers as one of several potential new power bases where the central government could retreat in the face of an imminent Japanese attack on Nanking. In the early 1930s, as a result of negotiations with the Ma (馬) family of warlords, who were in control of the Ningxia, Gansu, and Qinghai provinces, the central government managed to generate at least a propagandist image of a projection of its power into the area. This policy led to what has been termed the "rhetorical development" of the Great Northwest (大西北 *dà Xīběi*) and what was to materialize during the actual military takeover by the KMT troops ten years later (Lin 2007, 6–21; Lin 2011, 34–48).

The KMT's rise to power over the central government in the mid-1920s was also reflected in its statecraft ideology and theory of ethnic relations. Sun Yat-sen's theory of ethnic relations included the principle of five-nationality republicanism, which defined China as a polity formed by five equal ethnocultural groups. Sun also declared that all nationalities living in China were equal in rights and freedoms, including the inalienable right to self-determination. But Sun Yat-sen's theory of ethnic relations also contained much more assimilationist views. Since the early 1910s, he addressed the nationality question of China in the sense that all ethnic communities of the ROC actually formed a single people, and all regions (including breakaway Tibet and Outer Mongolia, as well as the semi-independent regions of Xinjiang, Qinghai, and Inner Mongolia) formed a single territory (Leibold 2004, 188, 197–99). Sun also maintained that the terms “state” and “nation” pointed to a single concept because the expression “China” signified not only a *country* but also a *race* of human beings. Heterogeneous elements should remain within the Chinese state and eventually merge with the dominant Chinese race: “We must facilitate the dying out of all names of individual peoples inhabiting China. . . . We must satisfy the demands of all races and unite them in a single cultural and political whole” (Lin 2011, 10–11). Another study pointed out that for Sun Yat-sen, China, which effectively meant the most numerous Han nationality, was the world's most completely formed nation because the people were bound by all five necessary criteria: blood/race, language, custom, religion, and livelihood (Duara 1995, 32). This theory was perfected by Chiang Kai-shek, who became the leading KMT strongman by the mid-1920s. Chiang argued that all people living within historical China are descended from the same ancestors, and therefore, belong to the same *race* (種族 *zhǒngzú*; literally “kind of lineage,” or *nesildash uruq*, literally “descendants of the same lineage”) and make up the political and ethnic Chinese nation (中華民族 *Zhōnghuá mínzú*). The linguistic, religious, and cultural differences among respective communities, or *religious clans* (宗族 *zōngzú*), were brought about by prolonged habitation in varied natural environments (Chiang 1947, 30; Ezizi 1997a, 391).

Given the totalitarian aspirations of the KMT party-state, Sun's and Chiang's politicized theories naturally influenced China's ethnic policy for coming decades. In Xinjiang, Chinese nationalism provided an unprecedented theoretical base for Chinese domination, which heretofore relied on the mere manifestation of strength by military presence and oppressive policies (Newby 1986, 200). What Chiang's approach argued, specifically in the case of Xinjiang Turkic Muslims, is well documented in the memoir of Yolwas (1888–1971), a very interesting figure of early modern Xinjiang history. Originally from

Yéngissar in southern Xinjiang, he held a high post in the Komul Khanate and later also in the KMT administration. After 1949, he continued to wage guerilla war against the CPC until 1951 when he became one of the very few Uyghurs who joined Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan. There, he continued to function in the exiled Xinjiang administration until his death. As mentioned in this study's introduction, Yolwas' memoir was presumably written with more than substantial assistance from an unknown KMT propagandist and, thus, presents an example of the official KMT interpretation of Xinjiang history rather than Yolwas' own reminiscences and views. In the text, he argued that it was misleading to point to linguistic and cultural similarities between the Uyghurs and the Turks of Turkey because this phenomenon was a result of the of Uyghurs' historical migrations from Xinjiang during expansions of splendid Chinese dynasties into the west, namely the Yuan dynasty that established empires in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. The concept of East Turkestan was an equally deceptive delusion fabricated by Russian imperialists, who introduced the terms "West Turkestan" and "East Turkestan" after their conquest of Central Asia in the nineteenth century, hoping to continue their expansion into Xinjiang. Similarly, considering Uyghurs to be a branch of Arabs was a misconception based on common religion because that would imply that there were no Uyghurs in Xinjiang before the arrival of Islam in the late Tang dynasty. According to the text, it was equally impossible to say that pre-Islamic Buddhist Uyghurs came from India. In short,

Uyghurs are genuinely native to China and have existed in China for several thousand years. Today, they are the main component of the Muslims, who are one the five races constituting the Chinese nation—the Han, Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans, and the Muslims. (Yaole 1969, 4–5)

The KMT was first pulled into Xinjiang's tumultuous affairs in the wake of the Komul rebellion of 1931, the subsequent Turkic insurgency that swept through eastern and southern Xinjiang, and the eventual rise of Sheng Shicai into the top Xinjiang position. During the insurgency, some Turkic activists dispatched pleas for help to the central government, despite the fact that they were only very poorly informed about the structure of the KMT power apparatus (Lin 2006, 46–47). On the eve of Sheng's advance into insurgent territory, several thousand Turkic Muslims fled and formed a sizeable diaspora of several thousand people in India, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Gansu, and Qinghai (Wahidi 1938, 14–15; Sabiri 1947, 16–17; Qadiri 1948, 86; Bughra 1998, xv). Thus, Nanking politicians not only realized the danger of losing the Xinjiang territory, but at the same time also understood that they had the opportunity to use the exiles

against Sheng, who was only formally acknowledging the central government's authority.

In this way, Chiang Kai-shek suddenly had the first opportunity to implement the KMT's recently drafted Xinjiang policy. A certain proportion of Turkic refugees, who sought assistance from the Chinese central government and ventured all the way to Nanking, were welcomed by the KMT, which appreciated their criticism of Sheng's administration. Prospective Turkic youth received an education and official training in Nanking, while others cooperated with the KMT on drafting an alternative Xinjiang policy. In spite of the purely theoretical level of such activities, given the limits of a central control over Xinjiang at the time, these activists were later to function as influential protagonists of the central government's authority in Xinjiang. Xinjiang Turkic refugees in China proper were organized into the Turkestani Compatriot Association (*Türkistanli Yurtdashlar Uyushmisi*, 新疆同鄉會 *Xīnjiāng Tóngxiānghuì*, TCA; elsewhere termed East Turkestani Compatriot Society, *Sherqiy Türkistanli Wetendashlar Jemi'iti*; *VCT* 5: 92), which had branches in Nanking, Chongqing, Lanzhou, Tianjin, Shanghai, and other major cities. Unlike the Turkic figures incorporated into Sheng's apparatus, the *VCT* was recognized by the KMT as a legitimate council of Xinjiang Muslims. The expatriate community's intellectual activities were concentrated around the Altay publishing house based first in Nanking, in Chongqing after 1937, and in Urumchi after 1946. The Turkic diaspora published monthlies *Tianshan* and *Altay* in Chinese and the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* in Uyghur (Zhou 2001, 174–75; Benson 1990, 53).

At the same time, the Nanking government occasionally managed to send delegations to Xinjiang, which sometimes included Turkic diaspora Muslims who had joined the central government (Ezizi 1997a, 310, 461–62). The aforementioned Turkic nationalist insurgent source specifically stated that the central government started acting favorably toward Turks following the outbreak of the Komul revolt (Wahidi 1938, 14–15). At the same time, a wave of interest in the northwestern border region (i.e., mainly Xinjiang) emerged. Several academic societies and think-tanks appeared, and books, periodicals, and articles were published on geography, demography, politics, culture, and other issues of northwestern China (西北 *Xīběi*). Turkic-Chinese and Chinese-Turkic dictionaries of the Republican era were also compiled, for instance, the 1938 *Phonetic Phrasebook of Colloquial Xinjiang Muslim Language* (注音新疆回文常用字表 *Zhùyīn Xīnjiāng Huíwén chángyòng zìbiǎo*) by Xu Xihua (徐錫華), which featured Uyghur expressions handwritten in modified Arabic script along with their approximate transcription into Mandarin Phonetic Transcription (國語注音符號 *Guóyǔ zhùyīn fúhào*) and translations into Mandarin (Xu 1938). Interest in the northwest intensified throughout the 1930s, and by the

1940s, it expanded into a regular program called the Development of the Great Northwest (開發大西北 *Kāifā dà Xīběi*), which comprised modernization, colonization, investment, construction of infrastructure, and massive population transfers from China proper (Lin 2007, 116–18; Millward 2007, 212).

One prominent Xinjiang Turkic figure associated with the Nanking government was Mes'ud Sabiri Bayqozi (1886–1951). He was born in northern Xinjiang near Ghulja and received several years of education in Turkey, earning a medical degree at the Military Medical School in Istanbul. After returning to Ghulja, he opened a pharmacy and was involved in progressive educational activities, for which he was briefly imprisoned by Yang Zengxin's administration in 1924. He eventually resettled in Aksu, where he supported the Turkic insurgency. After its defeat, he fled to India and eventually to China. He held a large number of important posts in the KMT administration, for instance, as a Xinjiang delegate to the KMT party congresses, a member of the KMT central committee, deputy director of the China Islamic Association, and professor at the Border Area Research Institute and the Central Political Institute. At the same time, he wrote articles popularizing Xinjiang issues and advocated autonomy for Xinjiang Turkic Muslims (Qadiri 1948, 145–47; Benson 1991, 93–94).

Another important activist was Isa Yusuf Alptekin (1901–95), at that time known as Eysa Beg, Eysa Yusuf, or Eysa Yusuf Beg. Born in Yéngissar to a local beg's family, he received a traditional religious education and Russian modern schooling in Andijan. After returning to Xinjiang, he briefly worked in the local bureaucracy. In 1932, he came to Nanking as a Xinjiang people's representative and lobbied for full autonomy for Xinjiang and for measures that would counter Soviet influence in the province. After Sheng Shicai's rise to power, Eysa remained in Nanking and gradually forged ties with the KMT. During the 1933 turmoil in Xinjiang, he was an interpreter for the central government's delegation to Xinjiang, led by General Huang Musong (黃慕松, 1887–1937) and met with prominent Turkic figures, who informed him about the situation in the province. After returning to Nanking, Eysa suggested that the central government did not recognize Sheng Shicai in his post of Border Defense Commissioner and de facto ruler of the province. After Jin Shuren, who had in the meantime arrived in Nanking in 1933, accused Eysa of being a communist spy, Eysa was charged and forced to discontinue his activities; however, he was subsequently acquitted and then permitted to resume them. He then functioned as one of the main organizers behind the Altay publishing house and also maintained communication with the Turkic diaspora in China proper, India, and Afghanistan (Wahidi 1938, 14; Qadiri 1948, 83–86; Benson 1991, 90–92; Lin 2011, 90).

The ideology of Mes'ud, Eysa, and Xinjiang Turkic activists affiliated with the central government in the 1930s and the KMT's early Xinjiang propaganda are well exemplified by the Uyghur-language periodical the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* (*Chiniy Türkistan Awazi; vCT*). It was a monthly supplement to the Chinese bi-weekly *Frontier Voice* (邊鐸 *Biānduó*), which was one of the Nanking publications that emerged after the KMT central government started paying attention to its northwestern border issues, following the 1931 Komul uprising and the growth of Soviet involvement in Xinjiang. Similar to other periodicals, which mushroomed within the wave of interest into China's northwest, the *Frontier Voice* and the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* issues contained articles on topics such as Soviet, Japanese, and British policies on Xinjiang; the role of the northwest in national defense; the central government's Xinjiang policies; the history and culture of Xinjiang nationalities; the Three People's Principles; and other fundamentals of KMT ideology or analyses of the current political situation in Xinjiang. The main figure behind the publication of the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* was Eysa, who also wrote many of the articles; other texts were written by his associates of whom nothing is currently known. The printing technique used in publishing the magazine was a lithographic reproduction of handwritten articles, itself an articulate illustration of the humble beginnings of the KMT policy vis-à-vis Xinjiang Turkic Muslims. Two issues of the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* that this research draws on, No. 5 and No. 6, were published in June and July of 1934.

From one point of view, the articles in the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* feature a discourse of nation and national interest that was very similar to those of the Turkic insurgency analyzed in Chapter 3. The "nation" (*millet*) of "Turkestanis" or "Turks" (*Türkestanli* or *Türk*) were residents in a "homeland" (*weten*) called "Turkestan" (*Türkistan*), "East Turkestan" (*Sherqiy Türkistan*), "Chinese Turkestan" (*Chiniy Türkistan*), "our Turkestan" (*bizning Türkistan*), or "Six Cities" (*Alte Sheher*). The Komul "revolt" (*isyan*) of 1931 and the subsequent turmoil were interpreted as righteous resistance to the corrupt misadministration of Yang Zengxin and Jin Shuren, which had not only disregarded the "life" (*me'ishet, turmush*) of indigenous Turkic Muslims but even sought to wipe out their "culture" (*medeniyet*) as a whole. In another interpretation, the revolt stemmed from fifty-seven years of oppression (i.e., from 1874 AD, again roughly the time of the Qing reconquest of Xinjiang) and was taken up by the brave and courageous "Turkic nation" (*Türk mil-liti*). The rebellion was a manifestation of "nation work" (*millet khizmiti*) and was powerfully driven by aspirations for "freedom" (*hürlik*), "republicanism" (*jumhuriyetchilik*), the "lives of our people" (*khelqimizning turmushi*),

“modernization of life” (*turmush yéngilitish*), “cultural progress” (*medeniy tereqqiyat*), and other similar concepts. Historically, East Turkestan was annexed to the “Chinese state” (*Khitay döli*) in 1878, and today’s Turkestanis are descendants of ancient Uyghurs. The *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* itself was published as a “political, social, economic, and educational magazine” (*siyasiy, ijtimai’iy, iktisadiy we terbiyviy mejmu’e*), which was a traditional allusion to Tatar Jadidist publications featured also by the *Life of East Turkestan*, the *Free Turkestan*, and the *Independence* of 1933 (VCT 5: 1, 4, 8, 30–32, 61, 73, 100, 110; VCT 6: 1–2, 7, 13–14, 25, 35, 41, 67, 73–74). This line of thought is well illustrated by the following excerpt:

Turkestan is my homeland, and those living in Turkestan are my brothers. What is beneficial for Turkestan is beneficial for me (*Türkistanning paydisi méning paydam*), and what is important for Turkestan is important for me (*Türkistanning zörüri méning zörürüm*). (VCT 5: 8)

But more importantly, the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* introduced a concept that had not existed in the Xinjiang Turkic nationalist ideology of the 1930s and was present only to a limited and highly ritualized degree in texts engendered during Sheng Shicai’s administration—the idea of Turkestan and Turkestanis being *an integral part of the ROC*. The concept of Turkic nationalism within the China polity was, in fact, conveyed by the very name of the periodical. The visual content of the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* also flashed rich Republican iconography, such as photographs of Sun Yat-sen, notable politicians (sometimes riding horses), Republican identity sites (such as Sun’s tomb), national sport champions (such as national female swimming champions in swimming suits), calligraphic inscriptions by leading officials, and Republican flags. All pictures were captioned in the Turkic language written in Arabic script. Given Islam’s proscription of depicting living beings, the graphic content of the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* can be considered altogether quite a revolutionary undertaking for its time.

The periodical also featured translations of Sun’s Three People’s Principles, Republican legislature (mainly the Constitution of the ROC), the history of the revolutionary movement in China proper, and other substantial treatises of Chinese republican and nationalist ideology. “China” (*Khitay, Chin*) and “the Chinese” (*Khitaylik, Chinlik*) were not viewed as enemies (as by the nationalist thinkers of the southern Xinjiang insurgency at the time) or a vague political concept and fellow Xinjiang nationality (as by Sheng’s propaganda) but instead as an inseparable part of the political reality of the Xinjiang Turkic nation. The Turkic “nation” (*millet*) was specifically described as one the five constituent

“nationalities” (*millet*) of China, or in another words, of the “Chinese nation” (*Khitay milliti*) that constitutes the “Republic of China” (*Chin Jumhuriyiti*). This discourse was also sharply critical of Sheng Shicai’s policy for only formally recognizing the sovereignty of the central government, while actually allowing the Soviet Union to run the province (*VCT* 5: 1–29, 34, 35, 62–68, 80–88; *VCT* 6: 37, 44–59, 62). The following well-known passage on Sun’s views on nationalism suggests that the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* and other early KMT publications of the 1930s were the first vehicles that delivered the fundamentals of KMT nationalism to Turkic Muslims of Xinjiang in their mother language and script:

There are four hundred million people (*khelq*) in China. In this number, several million Mongols, approximately one million Manchus, several million Tibetans, and more than one million Muslim Turks are of another race (*jins*). The number of people belonging to these outside races does not exceed ten million. That is to say that most of them are of the same blood, same language, same religion, and same culture and belong to the Han Chinese race. And what is the standing of our nation (*millet*) within the world? When compared with other nations (*millet*), we have the largest population and also are the longest lasting civilization, which has been around for four thousand years. We have been on the same level of development as European and American nations (*milletler*). But the people of China (*Khitay khelqi*) formed factions based on family (*a’ile*) or tribe (*qebile*), and there was no spirit of a nation (*millet rohi*) or national consciousness (*milliy tuyghu*). As a result, although we are a people (*khelq*) of four hundred million, in reality we resemble a nation (*qewm*) that does not stick together, like a handful of sand. (*VCT* 5: 67–68)

Another national interest expressed by Eysa and other contributors in the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* were Turkestani demands of the KMT government. In other words, while acknowledging being part of China, early Turkic Muslim activists affiliated with the KMT also demanded that the government fulfill its legal obligations. In this way, references to Sun Yat-sen’s ideology emphasized his promises of autonomy and people’s rule (*VCT* 5: 8). Another article stated that throughout the first twenty-odd years of the ROC’s existence, the central government was not in the least concerned with the plight of the Xinjiang people and thus enabled exploitation by Yang Zengxin and Jin Shuren (*VCT* 5: 62). Similar to the Tatar Jadidist *Interpreter* and the Xinjiang insurgent *Independence*, the *Voice of Chinese Turkestan* was seen as a means through which the Turkestani nation could address the government, which would then accommodate its demands and appeals, whereupon the nation

would attain freedom (*vct* 6: 43). Another passage pointed to the necessity for the central administration to cultivate local Turkic leaders and reflect on their demands:

If our leaders believe the government's views and policies, the Turkestan problem will be quickly solved. Then there will be no need to force us into compliance as it is happening today. If the government wants to solve the Turkestan problem hastily and does not adopt this measure, then we will be obliged to say that the government is not concerned about peace in our land. (*vct* 6: 44)

Throughout the 1930s, Eysa Yusuf and Mes'ud Sabiri became respected leaders of the Turkestanian expatriate community in China proper. At the same time, they continued their activities under the patronage of the Nanking government and were able to substantially increase their status within the KMT. Their integration into the power apparatus provided the central government with a measure of justification for its Xinjiang policy as one rightfully based on the local people's demands. In early 1940, Mes'ud was appointed to several important state administration posts, such as membership in the People's Political Council or the State Council of the Republic of China, and became closely affiliated with the so-called Center Club Clique, a highly influential wing of the KMT.

An important moment occurred in 1940, when Eysa was commissioned by Chiang Kai-shek to carry out a diplomatic mission to near eastern Muslim countries in order to secure their support for China against Japan. On his way back to China, Eysa visited Afghanistan where he met with the Xinjiang Turkic refugee community, including the exiled Muhemmed Imin Bughra (his role in the Xinjiang Turkic rebellion in 1930s was explored in Chapter 3), who had found asylum in Afghanistan after the ETIR's collapse in 1934. After returning to Chongqing, Eysa persuaded the KMT that Bughra could be used to strengthen the central government's influence in Xinjiang. After Bughra left Afghanistan and was detained in Peshawar by the British for alleged espionage for Japan, the KMT arranged for his release. Bughra arrived in Chongqing in 1943 and joined Mes'ud and Eysa in their nation work. Eysa and Bughra were also the two main contributors to the periodicals published by the Altay publishing house (Benson 1991, 90, 92, 94; Lin 2011, 90). Sabiri, Eysa, and Bughra subsequently became known as the "Three Gentlemen" (*Üch Ependi*).

The role of the Three Gentlemen and other Turkic associates grew exponentially after the central government gained control over Xinjiang in the fall of 1944. At first, the KMT appointed General Wu Zhongxin (吴忠信, 1884–

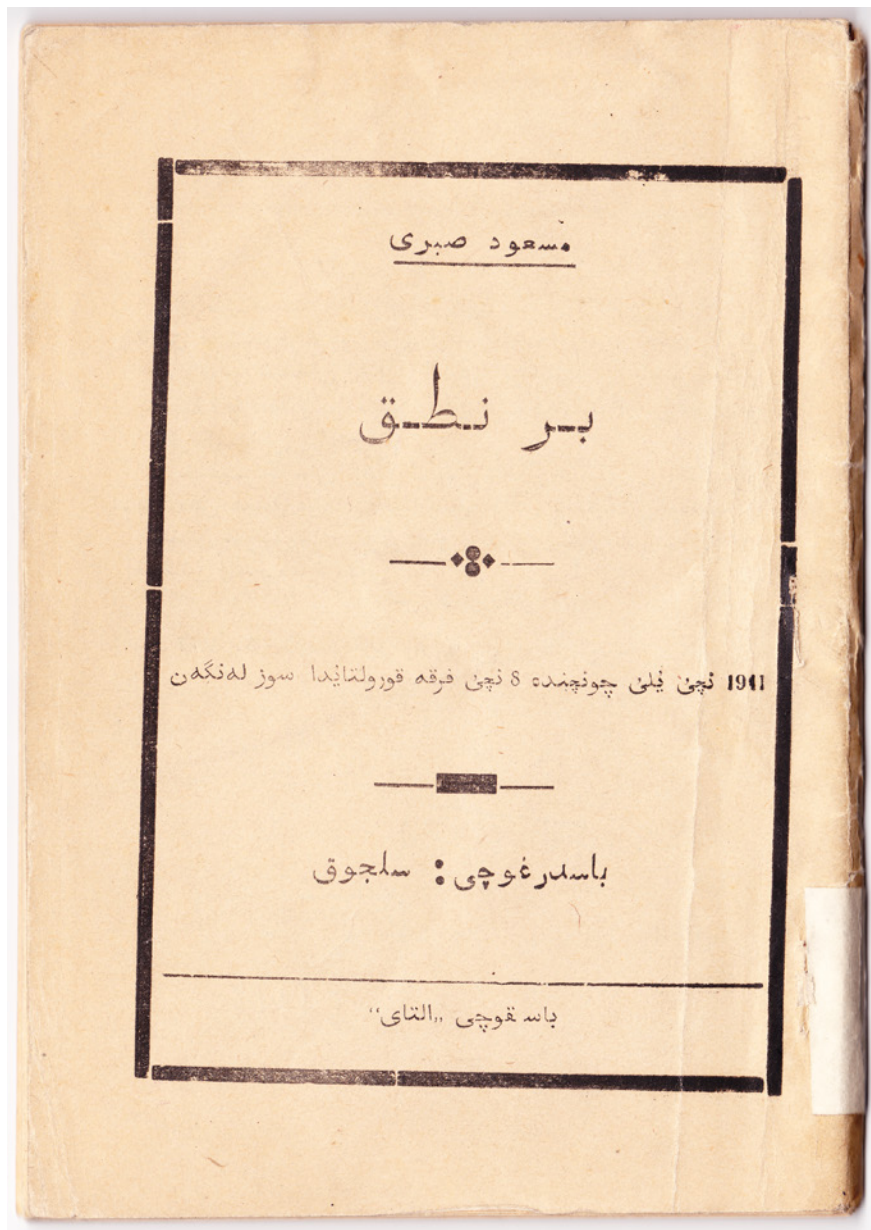
1959) to the position of Xinjiang governor. Wu was also a Center Club Clique member and as the head of the central government's sole ethnic policy drafting body, the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission (蒙藏委員會 *Měng-Zàng wěiyuán huì*, *Mongol-Tibet Idarisi*; the MTAC), had gained a reputation as a hardline promoter of assimilationist ethnic policy. In Xinjiang, his harsh measures quickly proved unfortunate for the province. His efforts to institute firm KMT control over society, deploy a large number of troops, and resettle Han migrants from China proper angered Xinjiang's indigenous population, while his economic policy sent the Xinjiang financial system into crisis. Moreover, simultaneous with the KMT's arrival, a rebellion had broken out in northern Xinjiang (examined in the following section of this chapter), and the provincial and central authorities again lost control over a significant part of Xinjiang territory. Wu Zhongxin was soon replaced as provincial chairman by General Zhang Zhizhong (張治中, 1895–1969), who had been entrusted in the meantime with negotiating with the northern Xinjiang insurgents in September 1945. After his appointment, Zhang consulted extensively with the Three Gentlemen and eventually also brought them along to Urumchi in the fall of 1945. After a coalition government of the provincial and rebel parties was formed in 1946, the Three Gentlemen were appointed to high posts in the provincial administration—Mes'ud Sabiri became the Supervisory Commissioner directly responsible to Nanking, Muhemmed Imin Bughra was the Minister of Reconstruction, and Eysa Yusuf was a minister without portfolio (Benson 1990, 70, 73; Forbes 1986, 196). In 1947–49, Sabiri even rose to the position of Xinjiang governor. Another prominent Uyghur figure who returned to Xinjiang with the KMT was Yolwas (Forbes 1986, 163–70, 190–94; Millward 2007, 213–19; Benson 1991, 91–93).

It has been remarked that Zhang Zhizhong is unique in Xinjiang's history because his actions were equally welcomed by all sides involved in the complex Xinjiang situation (Millward 2007, 217). Zhang instituted a number of measures designed to improve the economic and political situation in Xinjiang and also managed to establish a productive working relationship with the northern revolutionaries. He is also credited with a number of conciliatory measures in the ethnic policy. His public acknowledgment of grave mistakes made by the KMT and suggestions that power in the province should be turned over to indigenous Turkic groups (since these constituted 95 percent of its population) were indeed bold and significant departures from Chiang Kai-shek's chauvinist theory and Wu Zhongxin's totalitarian practice (Forbes 1986, 200). In recognition of Sun Yat-sen's principle of autonomy, Zhang's government appointed a number of native leaders into high official posts throughout the province and commenced a series of affirmative policies towards non-Han ethnic

groups, such as mother language education, publishing in local languages, and governmental sponsoring of non-Han cultural societies (Forbes 1986, 201–4, Millward 2007, 220–21). These KMT policy breakthroughs were partially brought about through lobbying by the Three Gentlemen, whose rise of political status enabled them and their associates to articulate the demands of Xinjiang Turkic Muslims in a more systematic and emphatic way. At the same time, the wave of publishing in national languages enabled the Three Gentlemen and other nation workers to disseminate their ideas concerning the Turkic nation and its interests among their fellow compatriots. Subsequent sections of this chapter demonstrate the late Republican Turkic discourse of nation and nationalism as articulated in the writings of Mes'ud Sabiri, Muhemmed Imin Bughra, and Polat Qadiri.

Writings of Mes'ud Sabiri

One source of research in the Three Gentlemen's nation work is *A Speech* (*Bir Nutuq*; Sabiri 1947, Figure 4.1 [Cover of Mes'ud Sabiri's *A Speech*]), a booklet that actually contains several speeches by Mes'ud Sabiri at the eighth KMT congress, held in Chongqing in 1941. The speeches were recorded by Eysa Yusuf, and the booklet was published in Urumchi by the Altay publishing house in cooperation with the TCA during the surge in Turkic publishing after Mes'ud's rise to governorship in 1947. The publication of his speeches some six years after the congress suggests that the issues addressed in the speeches remained important for Turkic nationalists under KMT's administration. As stated on the cover of the book, the reason for publication is the “historical need” (*tarikhiy hajet*) to provide a record of events, which would contribute to the “our people's struggle for national liberation” (*khelqimiz milliy azadliq üchün qilghan küresh*). Throughout the text, Mes'ud professed his and other refugees' devotion to the “nation” (*ulus*), “nationalism” (*uluschilik*), and “homeland” (*yurt*; Sabiri 1947, 1). He called his nation “Turks” or “Turkestanis” (*Türk, Türkistanli*), who were aware of Turkestan as of “our land” (*bizim yérimiz*) and “our homeland” (*bizim yurtimiz*; Sabiri 1947, 8, 12, 13). He rejected the division of Turks into individual nationalities and also rejected Sheng's concept of fourteen ethnic groups of Xinjiang. According to Mes'ud, there were four “nationalities” (*ulus*) currently inhabiting Xinjiang—the most numerous were the Turks, followed by the Hans, Mongols, and Manchus. He also regarded Kazaks and Turkic refugees in China proper, India, Afghanistan, and Arabia as an integral part of the Turkic nation (Sabiri 1947, 14–17). From the political point of view, the Turkic nationality was a part of “China” (*Chin, Khitay*), along with other four constituent “nationalities” (*ulus*; i.e., the Hans, Mongols, Manchus, and Tibetans). The Hans were specifically called “fellow countrymen” (*wetendash*) by Sabiri, while Turkestan and Turks were viewed as an important and



responsible part of China because they inhabited a strategically important territory and contributed to war efforts (Sabiri 1947, 3, 19–20).

In relation to national interests, Mes'ud voiced several demands on behalf of his nation, as well as “for the benefits of nationalities other than the Hans” (*Chindin bashqa uluslarning pa'idiliri üchün*; Sabiri 1947, 3). His simple request was to change the name of the Turkic nation and homeland in the Chinese language. In the politically correct KMT terminology of the time, Xinjiang Turkic Muslims were called Hui (回). However, according to Mes'ud this category comprised all Muslims living in the territory of the ROC, regardless of their ethnicity, lumping together several subaltern communities as diverse as the Xinjiang Turkic Muslims, Chinese-speaking Tungans, and Mongolian and Tibetan converts to Islam. On several occasions, Mes'ud pointed out that from the academic point of view, the name Hui was not suitable as a national name and requested that the words “Turk” and “Turkestan” be transcribed in Chinese as 突厥人 (*Tūjuérén*) and 突厥斯坦 (*Tūjuésītǎn*):

One of our requests is for our name (*bizim adimiz*) not to be “Hui.” This term is an erroneous name used by the Chinese. Is “Hui” supposed to be a name of a religion? If so, then it cannot be a name of a nation (*ulus*). If it is supposed to be a name of a nation (*ulus*) or tribe (*aymaq*), for instance coming from a corrupted form of the name “Uyghur,”¹ then it is not to be used as a name of the religion of a particular nation or a particular tribe. For religion belongs to a multitude of people. For instance, to say “Uyghur religion” or “people who believe in Uyghur religion” sounds somewhat peculiar, because Uyghurs did not use to have a special religion of their own. That is to say, our people have a name and ask to be called by this name. (Sabiri 1947, 5–6)

As for the Chinese calling us in Turkestan “Rag-Heads” and later “Huihui,” “Huijiao,” and “Huizu,” “Huizu” means “Hui nationality” (*millet*). “Huijiao” means “people of Hui religion,” and “jiao” means “religion.” We do not know where the term “Huihui” and “Huizu” for us and the term “Huijiao” for Islam came from. Anyway, the Muslims are thus called “Huijiao.” Some people say that the term “Huihui” is a corrupted form of the word “Uyghur.” As Islam came to China mostly via Uyghurs, some

1 This remark alludes to one interpretation of the origin of the term “Hui” (回) as being a transcription of the name “Uyghur” in Chinese characters 回紇 (*Huíhé*). The confusion in Chinese language of the terms “Uyghur,” “Islam,” and “Hui” was previously addressed in Chapter 2.

people started calling Islam “Huijiao,” that is “Uyghur religion.” Thus calling us “Huijiao” is the same as calling us “Uyghur.” (Sabiri 1947, 33–34)

Another issue addressed by Mes'ud was the central government's recognition of his nation's existence. From Yang Zengxin's rise until the early 1940s, the interests of Turkic Muslims had been determined solely within the territory of Xinjiang, where they formed an overwhelming majority of the population. At the moment when Mes'ud and others allied with the KMT and acknowledged that their Turkic homeland is part of China, suddenly a whole new political reality emerged for Xinjiang Turks—they became a *minority nationality of China*. Thus, struggle for acknowledgement by the Han majority, as well as by the ROC's and the KMT's power apparatus, became a matter of life and death for the Turks, and therefore, also the top priority of Turkic nationalist negotiations with the state. Mes'ud specifically requested that the Turks be recognized on equal terms with Mongols and Tibetans (Sabiri 1947, 3–4) and that the lack of systematization, transparency, and budget in the central government's “nationality policy” (*ulus siyaseti*) vis-à-vis Xinjiang Turks should be rectified by placing Turkestani affairs under the jurisdiction of the MTAC or by creating a special department that would be exclusively in charge of Turkic affairs (Sabiri 1947, 26–27). Naturally, preserving their bare existence in the face of the Han majority was a vital issue for all other non-Han nationalities and was translated into various levels of political practice. For instance, despite their excellent knowledge of Chinese, all Turkic, Mongol, and Tibetan delegates to the party congress were deliberately communicating with Han delegates in their native languages through interpreters (Sabiri 1947, 6, 10, 12, 41–42). Mes'ud spoke out openly about the issue of assimilation by the Han:

The central government must acknowledge and endorse the existence and status of all nationalities in China. Since long ago, the words that we are all one nation (*ulus*) and one blood (*qan*), which we kept hearing, have terrified us and made us wonder. If the central government would want to add other nationalities to the Hans and thus turn them into Han, that would be a big loss. If our small nationality is added to the Hans, how much bigger will the Han nation (*Khitay ulusi*) become? How much benefit will you gain? Maybe this step would even become detrimental, rather than beneficial. Today, the government of China is telling the world: “We are democrats and are struggling for democracy.” But regardless if imperialism is white or blue, it always oppresses minority nationalities (*azchiliq uluslar*) or even tries to annihilate them and wipe them out. Is it not so? If, in contrast to her own words, China makes us

disappear, no one will believe her words anymore, and no one will stand by the Hans. (Sabiri 1947, 23–25)

Mes'ud further pressured for the promotion of the Turkic language in publishing and education, arguing that learning the Chinese language was not as natural and easy for Turkic Muslims as learning, for example, English or French. Again, he justified this appeal to the Han-dominated KMT by pointing out that the Turkic national identity was distinct from that of the Han:

Having heard this, you might feel offended. It is right for you to ask: “Why do you not learn, or are not able to learn, something that we can learn?” The uniqueness of Chinese script and language is related to your own abilities (*qabiliyet*) and blood (*qan*); it is also related to atavism and history. But for us, it is somewhat alien. Our education should not be in Chinese script and language, but in our own script and language. In this way, education will be simpler and faster for us. This principle should be recognized and enforced from this day, and textbooks in minority nationality languages should be designed. (Sabiri 1947, 29–30)

Mes'ud also openly criticized the mismanagement of Turkestan and suggested numerous improvements in the KMT's policy. He called for allowing the region's autonomy in accordance with the state legislature and the official KMT ideology, the Three People's Principles. In response to objections to a difficult wartime situation, he asserted that yielding to demands in ethnic policy facilitates “unity and cooperation of all nationalities” (*pütün uluslirining birlik we yardemi*) and thus is beneficial for the whole country (Sabiri 1947, 20, 23, 36–37). Sabiri also asked for Xinjiang Turks to be directly represented in the central government, for central ethnic policy drafting agencies to be headed by ethnic minorities, for the budget for the education of minorities to be increased, and for the state to carry out a responsible minority policy (Sabiri 1947, 25–29).

Sabiri's statements were not welcomed by some Han KMT delegates. Notably, the chairman of the MTAC, Wu Zhongxin, reacted by stating that the rights of “frontier people” (*chégarali*) are stipulated in the legislature of the ROC, which is being fully implemented. He also denounced minority people's requests as endless, saying that if they are given something, they immediately asked for more. While asking for high posts, the minorities did not realize that their knowledge and skills were insufficient for such responsibilities. Wu further insinuated that minority people were not willing to be educated. He also ignored Mes'ud's calls for rectification of the Chinese term for Turks and

continued to use the term *Huijiaotu* ("Islam believer," 回教徒; Sabiri 1947, 38–39). Wu's disrespectful reaction incurred a scathing retort by Mes'ud:

Mr. Wu said that frontier people lack knowledge. Fine. But at the same time, who is responsible for us lacking knowledge? Who has put us into this bitter condition? Who has not educated us and not enabled us to be educated? Does Mr. Wu know? It is not that we did not study. We wanted to study and established our own schools. But you have not let us study and closed down our schools.² When we want to study, our children, who are still feeding on the milk of their mothers, endured great hardships, traveled over long distances and high mountains to inner China—is this an unwillingness to be educated? And even today, the education problem of these people is still not solved. It is not that we do not want to be educated. We do not want to be educated in Chinese, because the language is difficult for us. If you claim that we are unwilling to be educated without looking into the reason, this is a slander to us. I am not sure how frontier issues can be solved when a person heading frontier affairs administration holds views that are hostile to frontier people. (Sabiri 1947, 40–41)

At the close of the KMT congress, Mes'ud submitted a typed rebuttal in Chinese to Wu and three hundred other delegates. In it, he declared that equality of nationalities in China was merely formal, as were the state ethnic policy agencies. True equality meant equality in ethnic, political, economic, and cultural affairs, as well as in the use of respective languages and scripts. The education level of frontier peoples was low because the administration had not only not promoted it but had even obstructed it. Thus, the authorities should be blamed for this situation. The deprivation in skills and education of Turkestanis should be the reason for more concern by the authorities and not produce accusations of excessive requests or insufficient capabilities. The central government should counter the harsh feelings among the Turkic population toward the corrupt Chinese administration with policy improvements and facilitation of progress in the province. Mes'ud further argued that if the appeals of the Turkic Muslims were not addressed, their bitterness and harsh feelings would not go away. He even demonstrated Wu's incompetency for functioning as an ethnic policy administrator by showing his inadequate expertise in Xinjiang ethnic affairs (Sabiri 1947, 41–51).

² Sabiri referred here to obstructions to modern education during Yang Zengxin's and Jin Shuren's administration.

Another text that lays out Mes'ud's ideas on Turkic identity and nationalism is his short essay, *Awareness of Being a Turk* (*Türklük Oranı*; Sabiri 1948; Figure 4.2 [Cover of Mes'ud Sabiri's *Awareness of Being a Turk*]). Here, Mes'ud stressed the importance of “national consciousness” (*ulusal ang*), “feeling” (*tuyghu*), and “awareness” (*oran*) of his “fellow nationals” (*ulusdash*), as well as the “future of Turkicness” (*Türklükning kélecheke*). The relatively new concept of a Turkic national consciousness emerged only after the Turks “awakened from their exanimate sleep” (*tuyghusiz uyqudin oyghandiler*; Sabiri 1948, 1–2). According to Mes'ud, the national feeling of “noble Turkicness” (*ulugh Türklük*) facilitated a peaceful coexistence among all Turks and also transcended their ephemeral, individual lives. In other words, national values stood higher than individual values and personal lives (Sabiri 1948, 3–4). Mes'ud also noted that all nations had a national feeling. The Slavic nations in their pan-Slavist movement in Europe, today's “Chinese state” (*Chin döli*) in the Three People's Principles, Greeks in the form of their national movement (which is actually anti-Turkic), Hungarians, Serbs, Romanians, Germans, Italians, and other nations have all awakened and developed a national feeling from their original “tribes” (*aymaq*) and “clans” (*awul*). “Each nation, be it small or large, has national feeling (*ulusal oranı*). A nation without national feeling is nothing but a herd of animals” (Sabiri 1948, 6–8).

To explain Turkic “nationalism” (*uluschilik*), or the sense of belonging to a nation, Mes'ud clarified the important concepts of nation, religion, and state. The most prominent criterion of Turkic nationalism was language:

All people speaking Turkic (*Türkche*) are the Turkic nation (*Türk ulusi*), Turks. That is to say—the terms “nation” and “being a nation” (*uluschilik*) point to a land (*el*), or a very large group (*türküm*) with a unified language. All those people, who speak Turkic in Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkestan, Kashgar, China, Manchuria, Caucasus, Crimea, Russia, all of them are “of our nation” (*bizim ulusimizdin*) and are Turks. (Sabiri 1948, 9)

Turks also shared Islam as their common religion, which was also practiced by other, non-Turkic nations. The homeland of the Turkic nation—in other words, the territory currently inhabited by nationalities speaking Turkic languages—was called Turan by Mes'ud. Thus, Xinjiang Turkic Muslims are

Turks of eastern Turkic homeland (*doghu Türk yurti Türkler*), that is, Turks of eastern Turkestan (*doghu Türkistan Türkleri*). We are of the same nation (*ulusdash*) as Turks from other places on earth, for instance Anatolia or

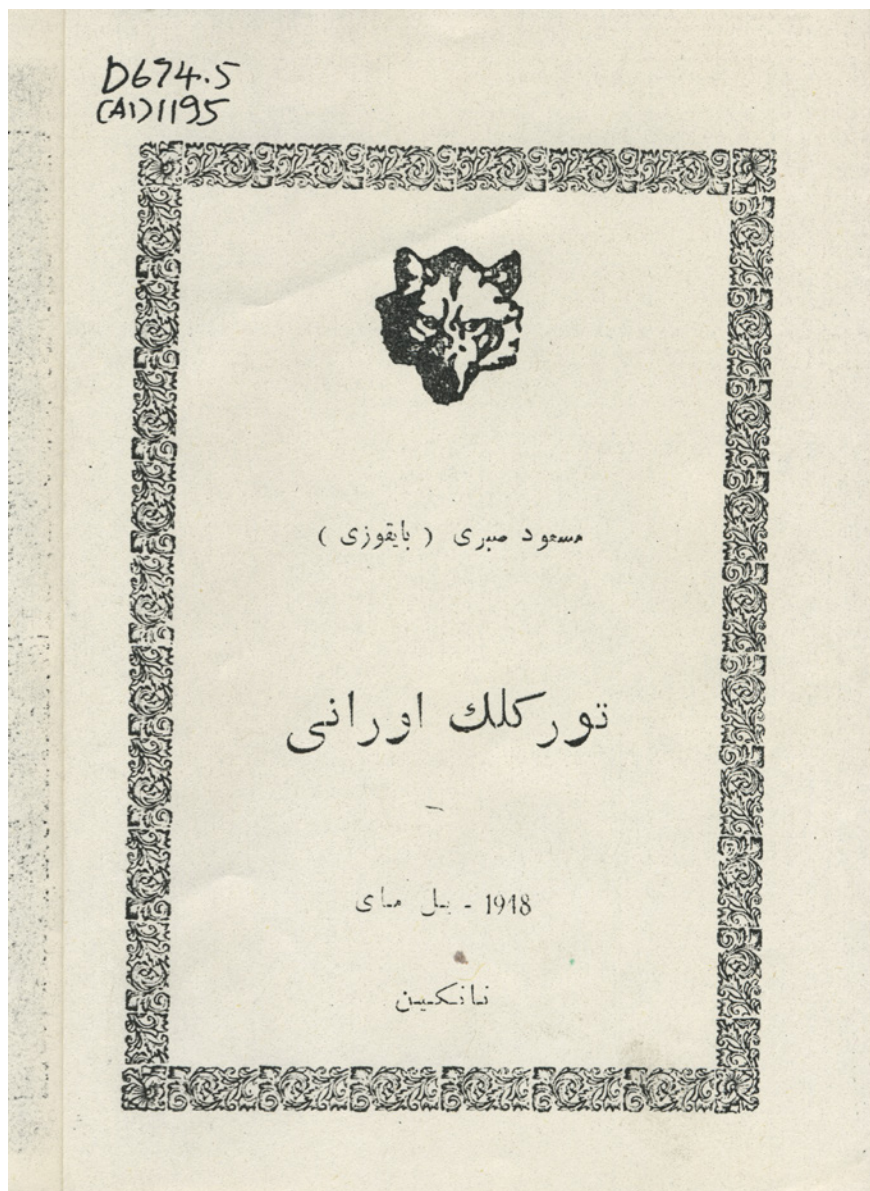


FIGURE 4.2 Cover of Mes'ud Sabiri's *Awareness of Being a Turk*
A facsimile, private collection.

Crimea. We share national affairs (*ulusal ishlar*) with all other people of our nation, we feel the same sorrow and the same pride. (Sabiri 1948, 10)

The state, however, united people of different language, religion, and national consciousness within one “territory” (*tupraq*) or “region” (*ölke*) and under one “flag” (*bayraq*). The Turks of eastern Turkestan belonged under the state of China, and all their state affairs are governed by its Constitution and legislature, “So we are of the same nation as Anatolian Turks, of the same religion as Arabs and of the same state as the Chinese” (Sabiri 1948, 11).

As Mes’ud had previously lived and studied in Turkey and was very familiar with Turkish nationalist debates, he illustrated the birth of national feeling in the case of Turkey. In his schematized narrative, he portrayed a nation that forgot its nationness (also mentioned in Chapter 3 in the case of Muhemmed Imin Bughra’s *History of East Turkestan*)—after the Turks lost their ancient national consciousness, they started calling themselves Ottomans. But this was not a name of a nation but of a state. Subsequently, a national movement gave birth to a national feeling and also to modern schools, which disseminated the concepts of nation, national consciousness, and “national obligation” (*ulusal wezipe*). Along with a national awakening, there also appeared a political national movement. Today, national feeling must be fostered by one’s love for the mother language. This was the problem of the Ottoman Turks, who did not treasure their own language, started using a lot of Persisms and Arabisms, and ceased to understand ancient Turkic writing. After their national awakening, the beauty of their national language was understood again, and all the foreign words were purged. From then on, people who had national feeling wrote in beautiful and easily comprehensible Turkic script. The Turkic language was the most significant value of that nation and should be used in literature: “Language is a spiritual homeland of a nation. If one does not work hard toward preserving its spiritual homeland, it, just like its physical homeland, will not survive” (Sabiri 1948, 24). An equally important way to cultivate national feeling was one’s love for the homeland. Each Turkic person had two homelands—one was the state that he lived in, while the other one was Turan, the “national homeland” (*ulusal yurt*) of all Turks. Regardless of which state’s administration the respective parts of Turan are currently under, they were still Turan and belong figuratively to the Turks (Sabiri 1948, 16–24).

According to Mes’ud, all the Turks of the world were bound to each other by mutual obligations based on their belonging to the same nation:

One who knows of and acknowledges his national consciousness, wherever on earth there is a Turk, he recognizes him as a Turk and loves him

in the same way as he loves himself. This is what it means to love Turks, to love Turkicness, and to love one hundred million Turks as oneself. (Sabiri 1948, 25)

Every Turk had numerous obligations to his nation, namely to become educated and wealthy, to oppose those who stand against Turkism, to uphold the good reputation of Turks, to speak well of Turkicness, and so on. Turkic children became “nation-lovers” (*ulussewer*) by speaking the beautiful Turkic language and writing in the Turkic vernacular. To love and protect the nation and national feeling was to protect oneself, and vice versa. In this way, the nation became unified, progressed, and was not enslaved by other nations:

[This] rejuvenated and enriched nation (*janlanghan zenginleshken ulus*) will come to sense its national consciousness by itself (*ulusal tuyghusini özidin özi tuyar*) and to acquire its identity by itself (*oranni özidin özi tapar*). Such are the national consciousness and identity. (Sabiri 1948, 29)

As a high-ranking KMT official, Mes'ud's thoughts were undoubtedly influenced by the KMT's nationalist ideology. But the contents of *Awareness of Being a Turk* also show the formidable inspiration of Turkish modernism and pan-Turkic nationalism that Mes'ud acquired during his lengthy stay in Turkey. Understandably, the language of the essay, and to a certain degree also of *Speech*, is replete with expressions and grammatical structures borrowed from Ottoman and modern Turkish. As the meaning of this slightly artificial language would hardly be comprehensible to less-educated Xinjiang Turkic readers, explanations in Xinjiang Turkic are included in the form of footnotes or parenthetical references throughout the text. Mes'ud clearly considered all Turkic languages to be dialects of one language rather than separate tongues. What is also remarkable in *Awareness of Being a Turk* is the fact that the text contains few references to the sociopolitical context of China, focusing instead on trends in the Turkic milieu. Although the close relation of Xinjiang Turks to other Turkic nationalities had been previously referred to by Xinjiang Turkic cultural agitators and nationalist activists, this pan-Turkic bond was never the basis or argument of their writings. For instance, despite the fact that the *Life of East Turkestan*, the *Free Turkestan*, and the *Independence* of the 1930s cultivated the Turkic identity of their readership, these periodicals were not engendered with the aim of fostering a sense of shared pan-Turkic identity among Turkic nations. They dealt solely with Xinjiang issues and were written in a locally comprehensible vernacular. In contrast, Mes'ud Sabiri's *Awareness of Being a Turk* stands out among the writings of early

modern Xinjiang Turkic Muslim intellectuals as an eloquent manifesto of cultural pan-Turkism.

Struggle by the Pen Waged by Muhemmed Imin Bughra

Another illustrative exhibit of how intensely the Three Gentlemen contended for the recognition and autonomy of the Turkestani nation was the discussion of the ethnic identity of Xinjiang Turkic Muslims between KMT historian Li Dongfang and Turkic nationalist politician Muhemmed Imin Bughra, which occurred in the form of articles written in Chinese and published in 1944–45 in the *Central Daily News* (中央日報 *Zhōngyāng rìbào*), a KMT flagship newspaper aiming at the general public. The argument has been previously researched and publicized by Linda Benson, who referred to Chinese versions of the articles reprinted in the *Altay* magazine (Benson 1991, 96–98). The very fact that the articles were reproduced in the *Altay*—the main Chinese-language forum of proponents of the Turkic nation which was targeted at Han readership—points to the importance the Turkic Muslim nationalist activists attached to the argument. Interestingly, the significance of the dispute was underscored several years later, when it was reprinted once again by the Urumchi branch of the Altay publishing house in 1948. This time, all the articles of the exchange were published in Turkic in a single booklet called *Struggle by the Pen for the Homeland and the Nation* (*Yurt we Millet Heqqide Qelem Kürishi*; Bughra 1948; Figure 4.3 [Cover of Muhemmed Imin Bughra's *Struggle by the Pen*]), including the following descriptive summary located on the front page:

This struggle by the pen with Chinese historian Li Dongfang over the history and name of our homeland and nation reveals the rightfulness of our national struggle (*milliy dewayimiz*) and shows a fine victory of Turkestani nationalism (*Türkistan milletchilik*). (1)

Its preface declares the author's and publisher's devotion to the struggle for their "dear homeland" (*eziz weten*), "great nation" (*ulugh millet*), Turkicness and being Turkestani, while the purpose of the publication is stated as the need to commemorate such a struggle (Bughra 1948, i–iii). Bughra's choice of the title perhaps alludes to the concept of the Muslim "*jihad* by the pen" (Ar. *al-jihād bi-l-qalam*), or the defense of Islam by writing and scholarly work. In that case, the title *Struggle by the Pen for the Homeland and the Nation* would be an excellent example of adapting a traditional religious concept for modern *weltanschauung* and national terminology. In any case, the *Struggle* is yet another exhibit of the Turkic nationalist activists' efforts to strengthen the sense of a Turkic identity among Xinjiang Turkic Muslims in the face of becoming a

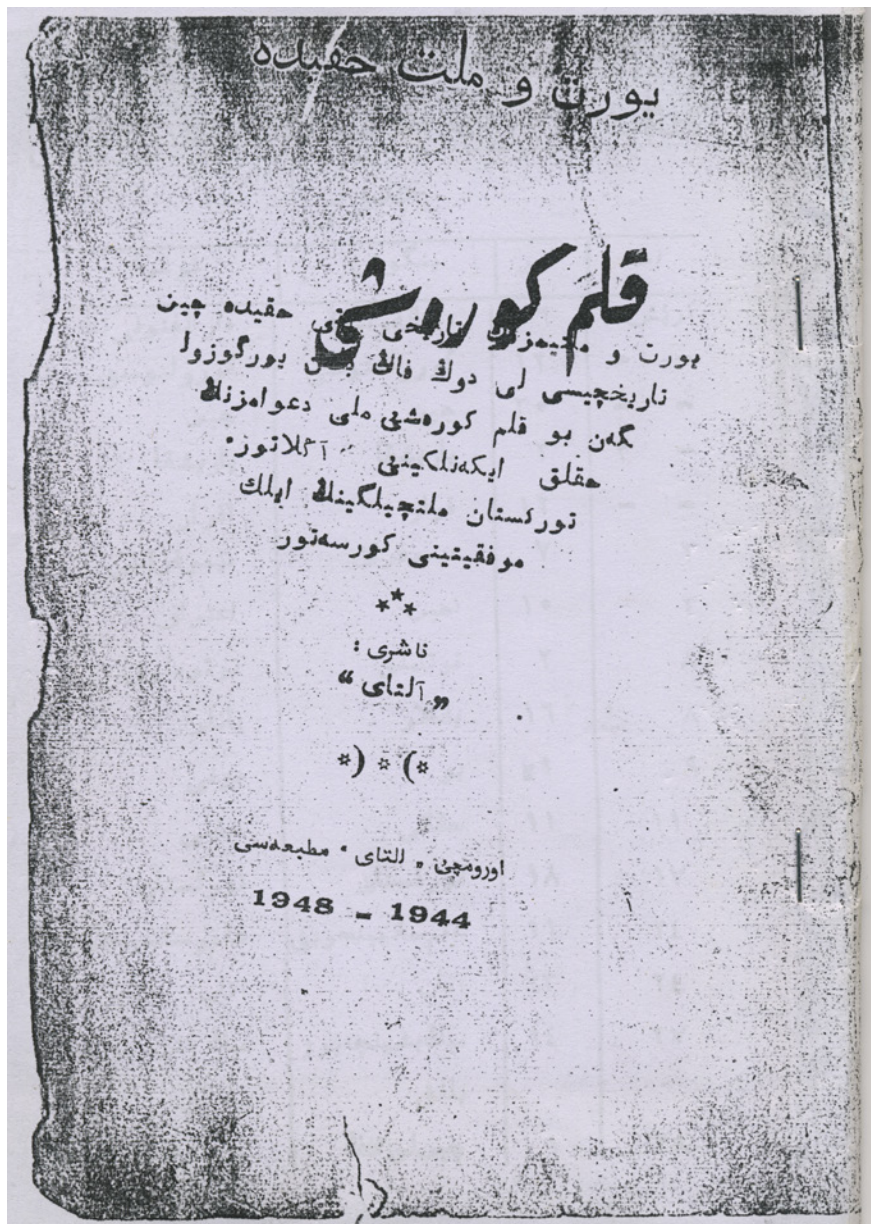


FIGURE 4.3 Cover of Muhemmed Imin Bughra's *Struggle by the Pen*
A facsimile, private collection.

minority nationality in KMT China. The re-publication of this series of articles in one booklet intended for broad dissemination reveals that the issues were still considered highly important even years later by the KMT Turkic activists. The booklet republished an important prelude to Li's and Bughra's dispute, which Benson did not address—a list of demands for the ROC Constitution amendments as raised by the TCA. After the central government invited suggestions for Constitution draft amendments in early 1944, the TCA held a two-day convention in Chongqing that produced a consensus on several of the demands made by the Xinjiang Turks. These were submitted to the government in April 1944 and publicized in October 1944 in another important paper close to the KMT, the *Ta Kung Pao* (大公報 *Dàgōng bào*, sometimes translated as the *Impartial Daily*). Again, the first request raised by the TCA was that the population of Turkestan should be called “Turkestani” instead of the incorrect name, “Hui”:

When Dr. Sun Yat-sen waged a revolution, he formulated a theory according to which the Republic of China (*Chin khelq döliti*) consists of five nationalities and that these nationalities are equal (*musawiy, teng*). The five nationalities are the Han (*Chin*), Manchus (*Manchu*), Mongols (*Mongghol*), Muslim Turks (*Musulman Türk*), and Tibetans (*Tibet*). Also, Dr. Sun Yat-sen in his first speech on nationalism (*milliy meslek*), one of his Three People's Principles, said that “[T]here are more than one million Islamic Turks appended to China (*Chingha qoshulghan*).” These are the Muslim Turks and the population of Turkestan, and thus the words correspond well with the truth. Even though the population of Turkestan was later divided into Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Taranchis, Uzbeks, Tatars, and Tajiks, all these seven names are tribal names (*aymaq ati*). By no means are they nationality names (*ulus ati*). The nationality (*millet*), language, religion, customs, and traditions of these seven tribes are the same; they are not at all separate. All belong solely to one nationality, and this nationality is the Turkic nationality (*Türk ulusi*). The term “Hui nationality” (*Hui ulusi*), which came to be customarily used (that is to say, customarily used in China), does not designate any of the tribes in Turkestan. These are scientific and historical reasons reflecting the truth, for which the population of Turkestan should be called Turks. (Bughra 1948, 3–4)

Similarly, the TCA argued for abandonment of the term Xinjiang and its replacement by the name Turkestan in Chinese:

The word “Xinjiang” is a name that emerged due to the violent and brutal Manchu administration. It does not at all suit the special ethnic,

geographic, social, and economic context of the Turkestan province. Turkestan is a place (*yurt*) that has since historical times been called by the name “Turkestan.” In Turkic and Persian, “-stan” means “place.” If the use of the word “Turkestan” instead of the word “Xinjiang” should become too difficult (that is to say, too difficult to pronounce in Chinese), the word “Tujuesitan”³ can be also used as a name in Chinese. (Bughra 1948, 5–6)

Again, Turkestanis voiced their strong concerns about the concept of the Chinese nation that was being advocated by the KMT ideology. It is clear that in their minds the absence of their recognition by the government as a distinct nationality automatically led to a lack of political rights as stipulated by the ROC legislature and Sun Yat-sen’s ideology:

In the draft of the Constitution, there is the term “China state nationality” (*Chin dölet milliti*).⁴ We have wondered about the meaning of this word for a long time, but have not understood it. We are actually distressed by it and suspicious of it. If we endorse the principle of permanent life and existence of smaller nationalities within the state, then the term “China state nationality” is unsuitable. To make Turks an example, they are one of the separate components of the government of China, and not a single part of some China state nationality. So we have not understood the meaning of the term “China state nationality.” Premier Dr. Sun Yat-sen has in his *Three People’s Principles* written that a nation exists on a condition of common blood, mode of life, language, religion, and culture. The Turkic nationality possesses all of these five necessary characteristics. There is no reason why the Turks should not associate on equal terms and have the same rights as other nationalities constituting China. (Bughra 1948, 6–7)

Arguing that providing assistance to small and weak nationalities in order to attain self-rule was one of the basic principles of state and party legislature, the TCA further demanded institution of full “autonomy” (*mukhtariyet*) for the Turkestanis. Another important demand was implementation of complete “equality” (*baraberlik*) in political, economic, educational, cultural, religious, social, linguistic, and other rights of all nationalities of China, which was firmly articulated by the Three People’s Principles. The TCA also demanded use of the writing systems of all China’s nationalities on state currency and stamps,

3 Bughra does not offer particular Chinese characters to transcribe the term into Chinese.

4 Turkic translation of the Chinese official term 國族 *guózú*, meaning “state nationality.”

protection of religious worship, an increase in the number of Turkestani delegates appointed to state organs in order to reflect the larger population ratio in comparison with Mongols and Tibetans, and use of the Turkic language in Turkestani administration, state examinations, education, publishing, and other areas of Turkestani public life (Bughra 1948, 3–15).

The TCA's outspoken demands incurred an intense debate between Li Dongfang and Muhemmed Imin Bughra. The Chinese version of this discussion has already been researched and briefly publicized by Linda Benson. However, as her article centers on a different subject than this research, it is useful here to summarize the sections of Li's and Bughra's dispute as it relates to the Turkic intellectual perceptions of nation and national interest. According to the Turkic edition, in October 1944 the *Central Daily News* published Li's article, "Are Xinjiang People Turks?" (*"Xinjiangliqlar Türkmu?"*). The article was dismissive of Xinjiang Turkic demands and presented a series of claims that the population of Xinjiang was not of Turkic origin. Some of Li's assertions were, for instance, that so-called Turkic people of Xinjiang could not be of Turkic origin because ancient Uyghurs had been allies of the Tang dynasty (618–907), because the Kyrgyz were the enemies of ancient Uyghurs, because Kazaks were related to Cossacks of Russia, because Uzbeks originated from an area of Central Asia that had been a dominion of China, and because Tatars were, in fact, descendants of Chinggis Khan, who mixed with the white race in the territory of today's Georgia. Li concluded by saying that although he had a strong personal liking for Xinjiang people, he strongly discouraged them from imitating the small nations of Central Europe and the Balkans by demanding separation and autonomy. Such demands would be in conflict with the ethnic, linguistic, and religious unity of the Chinese nation and could lead to its fragmentation; however, Li did agree that the term *Xinjiang* ("New Frontier") was unsuitable for the region. But given Xinjiang's long historical integration into China, he suggested that the name should be altered to *Gujiang* ("Old Frontier"), *Xijiang* ("Western Frontier"), or *Tianshan* (Bughra 1948, 16–21).

Li's contemptuous article provoked a heated retort by Muhemmed Imin Bughra in the *Central Daily News* in November 1944. Wryly questioning Li's expertise and citing works of Western Turkologists, Vilhelm Thomsen (1842–1927), Arminius Vámbéry (1832–1913), Vasiliy Radlov (1837–1918), Vasiliy Bartol'd (1869–1930), and Edward Denison Ross (1871–1940), Bughra refuted Li's views on the ethnicity of Xinjiang Turkic Muslims and stressed their common Turkic origin. Interestingly, Bughra asserted that Xinjiang's Tajiks were also a people of Turkic origin, who had migrated from Kashgar and Yarkend into the Tashqurghan region and started speaking a mixture of Turkic, Afghan,

Persian, and Hindi; moreover, they called themselves Wakhi, not Tajiks. Bughra further argued that should the differences between individual Turkic peoples in Xinjiang mean that they are different nationalities, then one would analogously have to designate the population of China proper as several distinct nationalities. Therefore, differences in language do not necessarily constitute distinct nationality. Bughra also argued that politics should respect scientific conclusions. He also reiterated that it had been Sun Yat-sen himself who stated that the Muslims of Xinjiang are Turkic.

As for Li's reaction to the TCA's political demands, Bughra again referred to the ROC state legislature and the Three People's Principles as the "highest state-founding ideal" (*eng yksek dlet qurush ghayesi*) that guaranteed equality for China's nationalities. He suggested that Li read these texts again and only then lecture Turkestani people about elementary state laws. Whereas the peoples of Central Europe and the Balkans strived for independence, Turkestanis have never demanded independence from China. Instead, they were requesting autonomy, which was moreover guaranteed by the state legislature. Bughra reasoned that by comparing these demands to separatism, Li sought to defame the Turkestani "autonomy movement" (*mukhtariyet hrikiti*), which, in fact, was a denigration of Turkestanis as one of the state-founding nationalities. Bughra suggested that if the government abandoned the principle of nationalism, then the state ideology should be renamed the "Two People's Principles" (二民主義 *Èr mn zhyì*), and all other legal provisions of the ROC should also be discarded. He consented to Li's claim that territorial integrity was the most important aspect of a country's existence. However, it was only by enforcing autonomy of all regions that a state's territorial integrity could be preserved, and therefore, it was necessary for the state to institute it. As for the name Xinjiang, Bughra repeated that the term was associated with brutality and oppression, and therefore, it could not be used by "democracy—people's government" (*dmoqrasi—khelq hkmiti*). He concluded by sarcastically refusing Li's proposals at renaming the province and stating his hope for Li's admission of the Turkic origins of Turkestani people (Bughra 1948, 22–36).

Li Dongfang responded in another article published in the *Central Daily News* in November 1944, in which he again presented several arguments why Xinjiang Muslims were not of Turkic origin. Among a number of views that were hardly scientifically sustainable, he also pointed out that during several Urumchi congresses, delegates elected by the people of Xinjiang had agreed to call the region's population by the names of fourteen nationalities, of which none was called "Turkic." Moreover, the issue of the ethnicity of the Xinjiang population was yet to be thoroughly researched and thus could not

be addressed in the new ROC Constitution. He again argued that demands for autonomy could lead to the fragmentation of a country, just like in the case of Czechoslovakia, where Henlein's⁵ requests for German autonomy evolved into the secession of Sudetenland, the Moravians, and the Poles. Therefore, Li asserted, there had to be a centralized authority in every country:

All our brothers (*qérindash*) must with all their strength stand on the side of central government and reinforce the unity of the Chinese nation (*Chin milliti*). For this reason, it is necessary to abstain from all senseless affairs that could become a reason for secession. (Bughra 1948, 37–39)

Bughra retorted in yet an even more biting article, in which he insisted on his previous views and supported the TCA's demands for constitutional amendments. He again challenged Li's expertise and urged him to stop comparing Turkestanis to traitors such as Henlein. Stating that Turkestanis loved their government as much as their homeland and nation, Bughra reminded Li that Turkestanian politicians came voluntarily to assist China's government and that China's government delightedly accepted their offer of help. Now, Turkestanis had raised their demands in the same way as other nationalities had raised their demands. Turkestan was an important frontier region, and that was precisely the reason why good policy in accordance with republican principles had to be enforced there. Otherwise, the region would not be peaceful, and that would prove disastrous for China. Bughra also denounced the Urumchi nationality congresses as assembled by force. Moreover, the fact that the Turkic nationalities of Xinjiang were called Uyghur, Kazak, Kyrgyz, Taranchi, Uzbek, Tatar, and Tajik did not prove that they were not Turks. Indeed, they were "Turkic descendants" (*Türk oruqliri*). Once again, Bughra underlined that by asking to be called by their own name, Turkestanian people were not seeking secession. He remarked that whoever is afraid of granting such a petty demand was a very terrified person. Throughout the world, all subjugated nations were called by their own name. Stressing again that politics must yield to science, Bughra posited that, unlike prevalent terminology like *Hui* or *Rag-Head*, the term Turk is scientifically correct, and the name *Chinese Turkestan* or *East Turkestan* is politically correct. Bughra concluded his reply with a summary of the argument: "Let me finally summarize for Mr. Li: Turkic nation is a nation (*millet*).

5 Konrad Henlein (1898–1945) was the leader of Czechoslovakia's Sudeten Germans prior to 1938, whose activities contributed to the signing of the Munich Agreement and the annexation of Czechoslovakia's border regions by Germany, Hungary, and Poland in October and November 1938.

It is not a clan (*awul*) or a tribe (*aymaq*). Turks are the autochthonous people of Turkestan" (Bughra 1948, 66). In sum, similar to the account of Mes'ud's speeches and activities at the KMT congress in 1941, the intense, yet open and free debate between Bughra and Li suggests that recognition of Turkestanis' existence as a full-fledged nationality of China was a top priority in the nationalist argumentation by KMT-affiliated advocates for the Turkic nation, and indeed, one that was not easy to defend in contrast with the strongly politicized KMT's ethnic theory and practice.

Writings of Polat Qadiri Turfani

Another late Republican intellectual engaged in formulating ideas similar to those of the Three Gentlemen was Polat Qadiri Turfani (1919–70). Born in Qutubi near Urumchi, he graduated with honors from an Urumchi pedagogical institute and later became the editor of the Turkic version of the main provincial newspaper, the *Xinjiang Daily* (*Xinjiang Géziti*), working closely with the Three Gentlemen. Some of his views of Turkic nation and national interest can be revealed by an examination of two of his texts. First, the undated essay *Slogan of Freedom* (*Erk Shoari*), which was published by the Altay publishing house in Urumchi probably in 1947 or early 1948, is an explanation of several political principles upheld by the late Republican Turkic nationalists in their actions and writings. The principle of freedom consisted of six component tenets expressed by the slogan, "We are democrats, we are nationalists, we are humanists; our race is Turkic, our religion is Islam, our homeland is Turkestan" (*Biz khelqchimiz, biz milletchimiz, biz insaniyetchimiz; erqimiz Türküdur, dinimiz İslamüdur, yurtimiz Türkistandur*). This motto was printed in the masthead of the daily publication, *Freedom* (*Erk; F*), one of the Turkic nationalist publications commenced during Mes'ud Sabiri's appointment as Xinjiang governor in 1947–49. Apart from this slogan, the masthead of *Freedom* also featured the slogan, "Unity in Language, Action, and Thought!" (*Tilde, ishde, pikirde, birlik!*), as well as a description as a "political, economic, social, scientific, featuring opinions, and literary newspaper" (*siyasiy, iktisadiy, ijtimaiy, ilmiy, pikiriy we edebiy ghézitedur; F 83*), which was, again, a reference to Jadidist principles embraced by Xinjiang Turkic nationalist periodicals in the 1930s.⁶ Qadiri further stated that contrary to some people's explanations, which interpret this slogan as a manifest sign of "narrow nationalism" (*tar milletchilik*),

6 This allusion to Gaspirali's *Interpreter* in the mast of *Freedom* is also remarkable from the point of view of the history of Jadidism—it signified that Jadidist ideas were still alive some sixty-five years after their birth and some thirty years after the original initiative was terminated by the Soviets.

“pan-Turkism” (*pan-Türkistliq*), “pan-Islamism” (*pan-Islamliq*), or “as having ulterior political motivations” (*bashqa bir siyosiy mekshset bar*), the above fundamentals of *Freedom* regard the “state interest” (*dölet menpe’iti*) and “interest of our nation” (*millitimizning menpe’iti*) as one (Qadiri n.d., 1–2).

In Qadiri’s words, the embrace of democracy referred to the fact that Xinjiang Turkic Muslims were prevented by past administrations from having a democratic government that promoted progress and development. Indeed, people had been slaves of the government in the past. Qadiri specifically declared that democracy was the most important thing for his people, as well as the noblest goal of mankind. In this day, democracy was realized and people were able to decide their future by means of an election. In a Jadidist manner, Qadiri explicitly associated democracy with light. Should democracy disappear in the future, the “future prospects of the homeland would become dark” (*yurtimizning istiqbali qaranghulishidu*). Explaining the principle of nationalism, Qadiri referred to Sun Yat-sen’s expression that “nationalism is a treasure which saves the nation” (*milletchilik milletni qutquzidighan gewher*). Therefore, Sun made nationalism the “basis” (*asas*) of a movement striving “to revive one’s own nation” (*öz millitini tirildürmek*). Nationalism and fulfilling “national interest” (*milliy menpe’et*) was the source of development and well-being of all nations, such as in the progress of England or China’s victory over Japan. Previous administrations of Turkestan had not allowed Turkestani “national spirit” (*milliy roh*) and nationalism to come about; Sheng Shicai had even wanted to extirpate nationalism altogether. Nationalism was therefore the most necessary thing for saving a nation. Importantly, one nation’s nationalism must be realized on the basis of respecting the interests of other nations. Qadiri called this principle internationalism. On a personal level, he referred to the need to perceive other beings as humans and respect their interests as “humanism” (*insaniyetchilik*; Qadiri n.d., 3–11).

In an explanation of part of the slogan, “our race is Turkic,” Qadiri denounced the terms Hui and Uyghur as incorrect names of the Turkic nation that had been instituted by previous flawed administrations:

We are a nation that has been coerced to forget its being a nation, and so we do not know to which race we belong. We do not even know the name of our race. Up to this period, we have been made to think of ourselves as of a Rag-Head nation (*Chantou milliti*), as of a Muslim nation (*Musulman milliti*), and as of a Uyghur nation (*Uyghur milliti*). But these are not names of our nation. The name of our nation is Turk. Rag-Head is a name given to us by the Chinese. In the world, there is no such nation as Muslim—it is a name of religion, not of a nation. Uyghur is also

not a name of a nation; it is a name of a tribe (*aymaq*). In his era, in order to alienate us from each other, Sheng Shicai divided us into Uyghur nationality, Kazak nationality, Uzbek nationality, Taranchi nationality, and several other nationalities. The Turkic race into which we belong includes Kazaks, Tatars, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Taranchis, Tajiks, Turkmens, Uyghurs, and other tribes, totaling over thirty. They have the same language, blood, and history. Most of them live in East Turkestan, where we are now living, in Central Asia, which is now under Soviet jurisdiction, in Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkey. As for the Turks who are living in our homeland, they are a part of the Turks living throughout the world. That is to say that since the beginning of history, we have been Turks and will go on living with our Turkicness until the end. (Qadiri n.d., 12–13)

Further, Qadiri specifically stressed that the phrase, “our race is Turkic,” was not a manifestation of a politically oriented pan-Turkism aiming at unification of all Turks in a single state, following the model of Attila the Hun or Oghuz Khan. Pan-Turkism had failed in the Soviet Union, where its influence vanished in the mid-1930s. The only independent Turkic country at the moment was Turkey, which was, however, too weak to liberate other Turkic nations and too busy trying to protect itself from the Soviet Union. Qadiri opined that given the negative connotations the word pan-Turkism currently evoked, for Xinjiang Turks to pursue pan-Turkism would actually be detrimental. Thus, the purpose of the pan-Turkist creed was solely to explain to which race Turkestani people belong. The same was true for the part of the slogan, “our religion is Islam.” As it was not possible to unite all the Muslims in the world, the concept merely sought to protect and revive religion, to introduce Islamic rules to the people, to support the nation’s religious leaders, and not to let religion become a weapon against the nation.

Finally, Qadiri stated that the principle, “our homeland is Turkestan,” sought to remind the nation of the true name of its homeland. Since the nation was Turkic, its homeland was called Turkestan. Contrary to some people’s claims, the name Turkestan was not newly invented or imposed after the “Ili rebellion” (*Ili qozghilish*); it had been in use for several thousand years. Geographically, the area of Turkestan was extensive and comprised western Turkestan, eastern Turkestan, and southern Turkestan. Therefore, it was correct to call the homeland of Xinjiang Turks “East Turkestan”. Politically, the western part of Turkestan was under the administration of Russia, and so it was called “Russian Turkestan.” The eastern part was under the administration of China, so it was naturally labeled “Chinese Turkestan.” The slogan thus sought to initiate the practice of calling a place inhabited by Turks “Turkestan”, as well as

to promote the knowledge that Turkestan had been the original name of the region and convey the hope that in the future Turkestan would remain the name of the Turks' homeland (Qadiri n.d., 13–20). The ideology behind Qadiri's *Slogan of Freedom* thus resembles Mes'ud Sabiri's *Awareness of Being a Turk* in its accented popularization of cultural pan-Turkism.

Polat Qadiri also authored a highly important *Provincial History* (*Ölke Tarikhi*; Qadiri 1948; Figure 4.4 [Cover of Polat Qadiri's *Provincial History*]), published by the Urumchi branch of Altay in 1948. In the preface, Qadiri commented that he based his "short history of the homeland" (*qisqiche yurt tarikhi*) on reading Muhemmed Imin Bughra's *History of East Turkestan*, as well as on sources assembled by Eysa Yusuf about insurgency in the 1930s and various other sources on more recent affairs. *Provincial History* was the first modern history of the region that was written by a Turkic intellectual, published by a governmental agency, and intended for mass Xinjiang Turkic readership. For this purpose, *Provincial History* (similarly to *Slogan of Freedom*) was written in an easily understandable vernacular and printed in almost fully phonetic, modified Arabic script. In regard to its contents, the text concentrated on a factual depiction of actions rather than on propagandizing ideology or offering evaluations of particular historical events or figures. Already the first sentence of the text revealed the idea that appeared in other texts by late Republican Turkic activists: the Xinjiang Turkic Muslims' homeland was politically a part of China, while culturally and historically, it belonged to the Turko-Islamic milieu:

Our homeland (*yurtimiz*), or our province (*ölkimiz*), is located in the northwestern part of the territory of China (*Zhongguo topraqi*) and in the center of the Asian continent (*Asiya qit'esining ortasida*). It is bordered in the west by western Turkestan, in the north by Outer Mongolia, in the east by Gansu, and in the south by the Pamirs. The name of our homeland used by the state is Xinjiang, while its historical national name (*tarikhiy milliy ismi*) is East Turkestan. (Qadiri 1948, 4)

Similar to Bughra's *History of East Turkestan*, Qadiri's *Provincial History* then narrated the history of the region to which it retroactively applied the name East Turkestan. Qadiri claimed that Central Asia was the cradle of human civilization, from which various Turkic tribes migrated and spread culture and progress to all surrounding areas. He mentioned ancient Uyghurs, one of the most cultured of ancient tribes, as well as the brief periods of Chinese control over the region. Manchu administration was described by Qadiri as an era of oppression, destruction of local culture, and sinicization, which ultimately

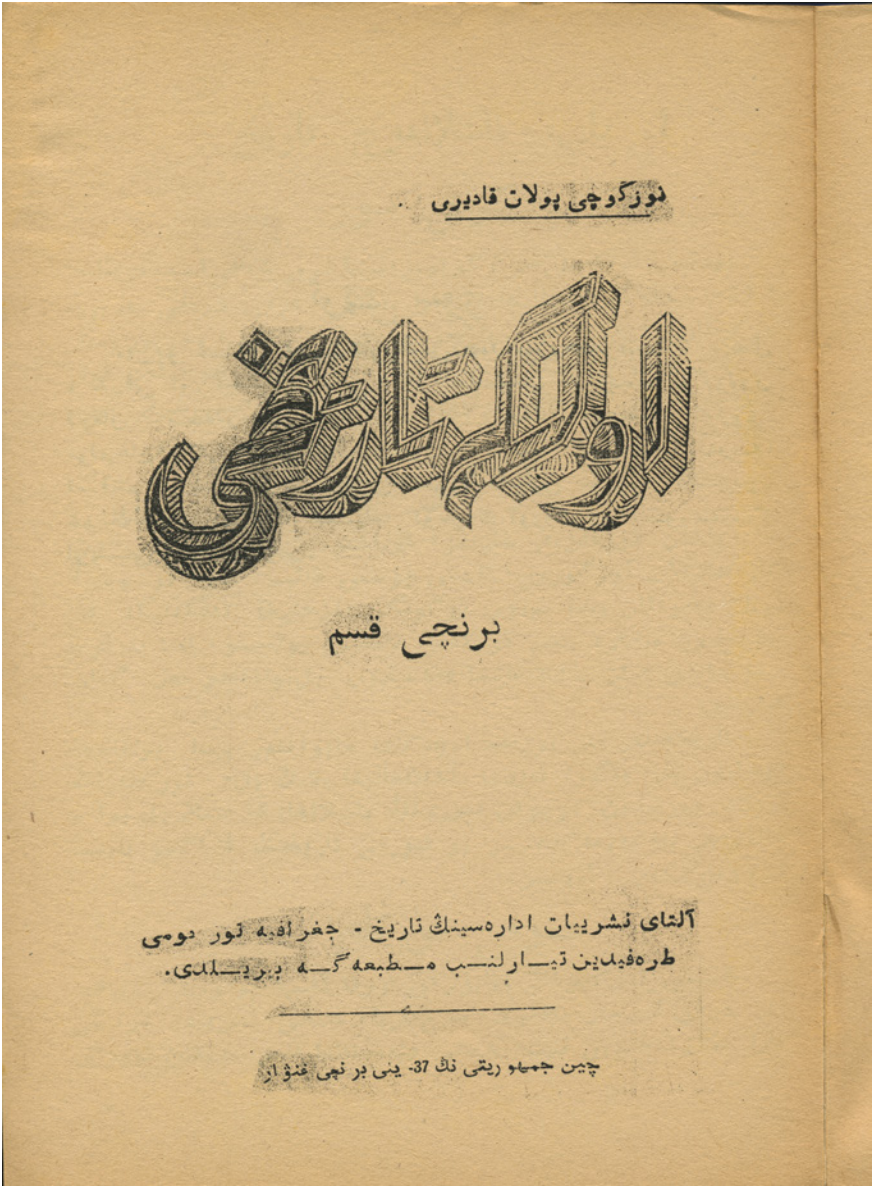


FIGURE 4.4 Cover of Polat Qadiri's Provincial History
A facsimile produced in Turkey, private collection.

led to uprisings intent on annihilating Manchus and immigrants from inner China. After the reconquest, the Sino-Manchu government accelerated its sinicization policies: immigration from China proper, institution of the Chinese language in official documentation, closing of national schools and mosques. Sun Yat-sen's revolution and Three People's Principles were interpreted favorably by Qadiri. Unfortunately, however, their effects had not reached East Turkestan, which remained a backwards and mismanaged territory under the strong influence of Russia and Great Britain (Qadiri 1948, 4–40). The insurgency of the 1930s was interpreted as a “revolution” (*inqilab*) against oppression and corruption, seeking to liberate the homeland and the people from under the iron heels of tyranny. The revolutionaries declared an independent “East Turkestan Republic” (*Sherqiy Türkistan Jumhuriyiti*), whose leadership was made of outstanding intellectuals (56–73).

Qadiri also disputed the legitimacy of Sheng Shicai's administration of Xinjiang and criticized him for allowing extensive Soviet influence in the region, for obstructing the “national movement” (*milliy hériket*) and “national progress” (*milliy tereqqiyat*), and for erroneously dividing Xinjiang's population into fourteen nationalities (Qadiri 1948, 80–83, 101–2, 110–22). The text also related the origins of Eysa Yusuf's and Mes'ud Sabiri's “revolutionary work for the homeland” (*yurt üchün inqilabi khizmiti*) and “efforts to save the homeland” (*yurtni qutquzush*): after being inspired by progressive “nationalists” (*milletchi*), “revolutionaries” (*inqilabchi*), and “outstanding intellectuals” (*munewwer ziyalilar*) abroad, Eysa and Mes'ud allied with the central government and lobbied for “national autonomy” (*milliy mukhtariyet*) of East Turkestan (83–89, 145–47). The text also spoke favorably of Mahmud Muhiti's promotion of modern education (102–3).

Qadiri's *Provincial History* was surprisingly critical of the KMT's administration after consolidation of its power in East Turkestan. In contrast with the Three People's Principles, the new government did not take into account the wishes and aspirations of the “local people” (*yerlik khelq*) of Xinjiang. Instead, it desired assimilation of “local nationalities” (*yerlik milletler*) and, in fact, stopped referring to them as “nationalities” (*millet*) and started using the term “descendants of the same lineage” (*nesildash uruq*). As a result, local people grew terrified and realized that the Three People's Principles' proclamation about the equality of nationalities and the need to help frontier peoples to establish their autonomy were nothing but empty words. Wu Zhongxin released prisoners but allied with religious figures instead of intellectuals who were the “essential social forces” (*jemi'etning asasiy küchliri*). The KMT government imprisoned many other people, and numerous local intellectuals fled their homeland. The government's corruption grew and so did the distrust of

the local people (Qadiri 1948, 130–33). Interestingly, Qadiri also devoted a large space to the rebel government in northern Xinjiang in the fall of 1944. He specifically mentioned the rebels' "national flag" (*milliy bayraq*) with crescent and star and also the fact that the rebels made armed incursions into the Six Cities region, the "predominant residence of Turkic-Uyghur people" (*Türk-Uyghur khelq eng köp orunlashqan jéyi*). After the provincial coalition government was formed from rebel and provincial authorities, both Turkic and Chinese were to be recognized as official scripts of the province, and national education and publishing were to be instituted (136–44).

Qadiri argued that the KMT administration became more moderate after Zhang Zhizhong was commissioned through negotiations with the insurgents, eventually becoming the governor of Xinjiang. Qadiri related that during this time, Turkic youth became organized in several nationalist (*milletchi*) and homeland-loving, "patriotic" (*wetenperwer*) associations, staging a "national movement" (*milliy hériket*) "for the benefit of the nation and homeland" (*yurt millet paydisi üchün*) to raise "national consciousness" (*milliy ang*). Specifically, these youth bodies petitioned the provincial government and raised national demands. Zhang negotiated directly with the youth representatives and acknowledged past governments' mistakes. According to Qadiri, Zhang even specifically promised that should the central government's policy fail again, he would himself stand as a leader of the Xinjiang people in a rebellion against renewed oppression (162–65).

Qadiri also claimed that Xinjiang Turkic youth representatives called on the government to recognize the Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Tatars, Taranchis, Uzbeks, and Tajik "peoples" (*khelqler*) as Turks; to unify the cultural associations of respective "tribes" (*aymaq*) into one comprehensive Turkic Cultural Enlightenment Association (*Türk Medeniy Aqartish Uyushmisi*); to enforce an equally free political system in the Six Cities region as was currently functioning in the insurgent northern Xinjiang; to terminate Han immigration from inner China; to appoint Turkic officials in administrative posts; to allow freedom of speech, assembly, and press; to erect memorials to national heroes who had died in prison; to support orphans; to bring Sheng Shicai to Urumchi and punish him publicly in front of the Xinjiang people for his evil deeds; and several other demands. Other agencies, such as the Society for Cultural Development of the Northwest (*Gherbiy Shimal Medeniy Qurulush Jemi'tti*) or the Association for Joint Building of New Xinjiang (*Yéngi Xinjiang Qurushqa Hemkarlashmaq Uyushmisi*), were also established by the government to facilitate affirmative cultural policies. Under Zhang, the first Xinjiang Turkic dance and song troupe was established and sent on tours to China's interior, including Taiwan, to change the Han misconception

that Turkestanis were an uncultured and backward people (Qadiri 1948, 162–66, 187–88).

Provincial History also provided an account of the Three Gentlemen's activities. Qadiri remarked that the Three Gentlemen were not favored by the politicians of the Ili faction, who called them "China-ists" (*Khitaychi*) or those who had "sold [their nation and homeland] to China" (*Khitaygha sétilghan*). The Three Gentlemen were equally disliked by the KMT hard line administration, which obstructed their nationalist activities. Qadiri claimed that in reality, the triumvirate was deeply involved in nation work. Following the appointment of Zhang Zhizhong, they were able to implement some of their ideas. Namely, they used their high political status to accelerate the advocacy of Turkic demands to the central government. The main request continued to be autonomy:

To grant high-degree autonomy (*aliy mukhtariyet*) to Turkestan is the only way to preserve its eternal peace, to ensure that it will not separate from the state and to completely solve the Turkestan national problem (*Türkistan milliy mesilisi*). (Qadiri 1948, 154)

Besides autonomy, the Three Gentlemen demanded that the government call Turkestan people by their own name and recognize them as a "nationality" (*millet*, 民族 *mínzú*); abolish arbitrary taxation; suspend Han immigration from inner China; reduce troops stationed in the province; raise Turkestanis to a position equal with Mongols and Tibetans; institute education in the Turkic language; protect Turkic culture, history, language, writing, and customs; terminate the practice of Hans running the region, and appoint Turkic figures to high posts, among other things. Besides lobbying on the highest level, the Three Gentlemen were also said by Qadiri to have triggered a wave of Turkic national awakening, namely in regard to national publishing and education.⁷ Given the fact that Mes'ud was a "nationalist" (*milletchi*), Turkic nationalism thrived during his governorship. Young people acquired an awareness of "their ancestors' history" (*ata babasining tarikhi*), of the situation in the homeland (*yurtning ehwali*), and of the "name of their nation" (*millitining ismi*). There was also a movement bent on unifying the national, fully phonetic orthogra-

7 The boom in Turkic education and publishing was indeed exemplified by the publication of the Uyghur primer, *Alphabet for Turks-Uyghurs* (*Türk-Uyghurlar Üchiün Élifba*), which attempted to introduce fully phonetic Arabic-based Uyghur script (Muti'i 1947). The author, the aforementioned intellectual Ibrahim Muti'i was associated with the KMT administration prior to 1949. For more on his life and role in Uyghur intellectual history, as well as for an excellent oral history of modern Xinjiang, see William Clark's article (2012).

phies of individual Turkic groups which had been commenced during Sheng Shicai's era. Qadiri opined that, as a result of the Three Gentlemen's efforts, the Turkic awareness spread more around Urumchi than in southern Xinjiang (Qadiri 1948, 144–58, 186–88). Thus, similar to Muhemmed Imin Bughra's *History of East Turkestan*, Polat Qadiri Turfani's *Provincial History* is an excellent example of a national protest text that integrates constructing a modern national identity with inventing its "historical" past through the formulation of national interests, such as cultural awakening, technological modernization, economic progress, and political rights.

In sum, the examined writings of the 1940s' East Turkestanian nation workers reveal that their ideology was similar to that of the politicized Turkic national movement of the 1930s analyzed in Chapter 3. Turkic nationalists of the 1940s perceived their community as a nation or nationality (*millet*, *ulus*) defined by a common descent (Turkic), religion (Islam), homeland (East Turkestan, Chinese Turkestan, Turkestan, Turan), language, history, culture, national decline under past oppressive administration (that of Sheng Shicai), and other national attributes. For nationalist intellectuals of the 1940s, the Turkic nation consisted of several tribes or clans residing in the territory of East Turkestan, such as the Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Taranchis, Uzbeks, Tatars, and even Tajiks. Again, religious denomination was an identity marker that was, at least rhetorically, of equal importance to ethnicity. However, judging by the extent of the space dedicated to the discussion of ethnic and religious affairs in the examined texts, it can be argued that for Turkic intellectuals in the 1940s, ethnicity and Turkic lineage were much more significant national identity markers when compared to religion than for activists of the 1930s. As observed by Laura Newby, despite the fact that Islam provided a useful common language, in the 1940s the nationalists felt that religion could not suffice to secure the goals of the nationalist movement (1986, 223).

In contrast, features of the 1930s' modernization imperative, namely concepts such as national liberation, freedom, improvement, progress, national awakening, promotion of national culture, modernity, national education, and publishing, continued to figure as important East Turkestanian national interests in the 1940s. The KMT-allied national activists of the 1940s made sure to establish the important symbolic connection with past rebellions and resistance movements. Apart from being able to build on prior identity patterns, such as ancient cultural and political heritage, Turkic nationalists of the 1940s were also able to make great use of the concepts of East Turkestanian and Uyghur national identity and interest, which had been already articulated by their predecessors (or, in the case of Muhemmed Imin Bughra, themselves) in the 1930s. Mes'ud, Eysa, Bughra, and others exploited the popular indignation at previous

flawed administrations; propagandized national identity and culture as the basis of Xinjiang Turkic public life; and acted toward the institution of national consciousness among youth, civilian elites, administration, and political leadership. In this effort, they relied on familiar institutions like publishing in the vernacular, social organizations, and youth associations. The fact that in the texts discussed above the intellectual discourse of the Xinjiang settled Muslim Turkic community as an East Turkestani nation did not undergo a substantial change in comparison with the previous decade suggests that this concept became fairly consolidated among local intellectual strata by the early 1940s.

A major change did, however, occur in the discourse of the main national interest. The Three Gentlemen and their colleagues operated in an altogether different political setting than nationalists of the 1930s. The Turkic insurgency, by default, functioned on the premise that East Turkestan is independent from China. Similarly, although the previous administrations of Yang Zengxin, Jin Shuren, and Sheng Shicai rhetorically proclaimed their allegiance to the ROC, they ran Xinjiang as an entity almost completely devoid of any factual interaction with China proper. In these past settings, the Turkic population of East Turkestan constituted an overwhelming majority of over ninety percent of the independent region's population. This phenomenon changed completely when Xinjiang found itself under the control of the ROC's KMT-dominated central government in the 1940s. Turkic inhabitants of Xinjiang suddenly became a part of the Han state, which was theoretically multinational but in reality unitary, where they constituted less than one percent of the total population. It was at the moment of the KMT's arrival in Xinjiang that the local indigenous Turkic Muslims' status fell from a *nation* or *nationality* to China's *minority nationality* or *frontier people*. Similarly, Xinjiang became one of many regions of China—a reality signified, for instance, in the shift of connotations of the term “*ölke*,” which had from *region* acquired the clear meaning of a *province* of China.

The central government's takeover of Xinjiang generated a whole new set of political interests for the Turkic national movement. From then on, efforts of Turkic nationalists consisted of awakening a national consciousness and creating national attributes of the East Turkestani nation, as examined in Chapter 3. In confrontation with the overwhelmingly Han Chinese state, the most important points on the national agenda were demands for the state's recognition and preservation of the Xinjiang Turks as a separate nationality. In other words, only a successful preservation and defense of a national boundary would prove vital for their survival (Barth 1969, 14) and would secure the Xinjiang Turks' future existence as a distinct ethnic group in China. This task was especially difficult given the KMT's adherence to Chiang Kai-shek's assimilationist

argument that all people residing within the ROC's borders constituted a single Chinese nation (中華民族 *Zhōnghuá mínzú*). The Turkic nationalists, therefore, had to engage in tiresome and heated disputes with KMT theoreticians, emphasizing the distinct identity of Xinjiang Turks, which was different from the majority Han population. They insisted that while Turks and East Turkestan were under the political control of China, their ethnic, religious, and cultural identity was inseparable from other Turkic nations in other countries. In fact, the 1940s' Xinjiang pan-Turkists perceived the Turkic population of Xinjiang and other Turkic nations as one nation, not making a distinction between the concepts of Turkic and Turkish, which is used today. It is important to realize that their premise of all Turkic groups throughout the world being tribes of a single Turkic nation might have been influenced or inspired by Chiang Kai-shek's theory of the Chinese nation. But this cultural pan-Turkism was, in fact, a very powerful argument in defense against the Han majority and KMT's assimilative ethnic policy because it placed East Turkestanis into mythical Turan, a massive Turkic milieu stretching over two continents and numbering over one hundred million people. It is a question for further research as to whether and how the emergence of this pan-Turkist concept in the minds of KMT Turkic allies was stimulated by the intra-KMT discussion of the cultural and ethnic homogeneity of the Chinese nation.

The Turkic nationalists of the 1940s argued that the official term *Hui* should be replaced by the terms *Turk* and *Turkestan* in China's official terminology. Referring to Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles and other state legislature stipulating the equality of China's five constituent nationalities, they pushed for recognition of Turks as a nationality equal in ethnic, political, economic, and cultural rights to the Hans, Mongols, Tibetans, and Manchus. They were often critical of the KMT's incompetency in ethnic policy, the central government's discrimination against Xinjiang Turks, and Chinese imperialism. By citing the basic Chinese revolutionary premises of the equality of nationalities and democracy, the Three Gentlemen effectively managed to turn Chinese history against the KMT's Han chauvinists and, to borrow an attractive expression, to scrape boldly the weld between modern nationalism and imperialism (Anderson 1991, 117). Firmly rejecting accusations of separatism, they also argued that only effective ethnic policy and high-degree autonomy could result in the successful integration of Chinese Turkestan into China, and thus be beneficial for the whole state. The KMT-affiliated Turkic nation workers of the 1940s perceived the East Turkestanis' national interest and the ROC's state interest as fully compatible. Their ideology espoused the ideals of Chinese revolutionary republicanism, democracy, and nationalism, all the way from early Sun Yat-sen's thoughts and the 1911 Ili revolutionaries to

contemporary KMT ideology, legislature, and symbology. At the same time, they performed complex nation work aspiring to construct and promote a Turkic national identity. The ideology of the Three Gentlemen and Polat Qadiri was an elegant and strikingly compatible fusion of Turkic ethnic subnationalism with the ideas of Chinese revolutionary state nationalism.

4.2 The Three Districts' Revolution (1944–49)

The last important stimulus for the evolution of early modern Uyghur intellectual concepts of nation and nationalism researched in this volume arose during an insurgency in northern Xinjiang in the late 1940s. As with the central Nanking government's policy vis-à-vis Xinjiang Turkic Muslims, the roots of the northern Xinjiang rebellion lay in the 1930s. The unrest was started by the Kazaks, some of whom had in fact come to Xinjiang only recently from the USSR in flight of Soviet collectivization campaigns during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Since the mid-1930s, small-scale Kazak uprisings erupted in Xinjiang in the areas of Tianshan, near Gez K  l by the Gansu-Qinghai border, and in Altay. The intensity of unrest somewhat decreased in the wake of Sheng's consolidation of power in 1937, but the fighting resumed after Sheng broke with the USSR in 1942, which prompted the Soviets to start indirectly supporting Kazak rebels through the Mongolian People's Republic. Kazak resistance in Xinjiang eventually centered in Altay around the figure of Osman Batur (Osman the Hero, 1899–1951), whose activities, however, did not seem to have a deep political agenda. Kazak unrest further increased with the KMT's policies, particularly after the new administration announced its intention to requisition horses for the provincial army (Forbes 1986, 137, 155–57, 170–72).

Another locus of insurgent activity in northern Xinjiang was the Ili valley, which had been the best developed area of the province since the late nineteenth century due to its proximity to Russia. After Sheng severed Xinjiang's ties with the USSR in 1942, the Ili valley and all of northern Xinjiang lost its means of income from exporting raw materials and livestock, as well as access to imported manufactured goods. After the KMT's takeover of Xinjiang in the fall of 1944, the decline in Soviet trade was accompanied by increased taxation, soaring prices for daily consumption goods, requisitions in labor and kind, and termination of cross-border cultural ties. The crackdown involved basically everything related to the Soviet Union, even periodicals, books, textbooks, social organizations, and numerous intellectuals educated in Soviet Central Asia. In October 1944, a small clash in the township of Nilka triggered an insurgency that quickly spread throughout northern Xinjiang. The rebels seized

control of the district capital of Ghulja and, exactly eleven years to the day after the founding of the first East Turkestan Republic (see Chapter 3; ETIR), proclaimed the second East Turkestan Republic (*Sherqiy Türkistan Jumhuriyiti*; ETR) on November 12, 1944. By the summer of 1945, the rebels formed a regular military force under the name the Ili National Army (*Ili Milliy Armiyisi*, INA), took control of the so-called Three Districts of northern Xinjiang (Altay, Tarbaghatay, and Ili), and seriously challenged the provincial troops near Urumchi. An armistice with the government was reached in September 1945 (Forbes 1986, 172–76, 186–90; Benson 1990, 42–52).

Some of the rebellion's traits were very similar to those of the Turkic insurgency of the 1930s. The 1940s' movement was also set in motion by economic crisis aggravated by political abuse of power by the newly arrived and ethnically heterogeneous administration. Initial action was taken by Turkic groups, namely Kazaks (who were the most populous group in the Three Districts and formed over fifty percent of its population), Uyghurs (who were, in fact, considered Taranchi according to Sheng's classification), Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and Tatars. Despite the fact that the common anti-KMT cause also attracted all the other non-Turkic ethnic groups inhabiting northern Xinjiang, namely Tungans, Mongols, Shiwes, Solons, Manchus, Russians, and even some Han, the name of the ETR and the timing of its proclamation suggests that it was established primarily as a state for Turkic Muslim ethnic groups. A flag with a crescent and star on a green background symbolizing Islam was used, and massacres of Hans occurred frequently in the early turmoil of fighting. The highest post of the ETR's president was initially given to a highly popular religious scholar, Elikhan Töre Saghuni (1885–1976), an Uzbek from Russian Turkestan who had fled to Xinjiang to escape the communists in the 1920s and served a sentence of several years in Sheng Shicai's prison until 1942. Similarly, Hakim Beg Khoja, appointed as Töre's deputy, was an influential Uyghur landowner, while other prominent members of the government, such as Abdulmuta'ali Khalifa, minister of religious affairs, and Saud Damolla, vice-minister of education, allegedly used their religious expertise and charisma to ally with Töre in efforts to institute Islamic law, religious education, and selection of state officials based on their religious knowledge (Forbes 1986, 176–79, 184). As discernible in the pamphlet below, issued in an early stage of the uprising and signed by Elikhan Töre, some aspects of the proclamation of the ETR were strongly reminiscent of the first attempt at East Turkestani independence in 1933:

The Turkestan Islam Government is organized: Praise be to Allah for his manifold blessings! Allah be praised! The aid of Allah has given us the heroism to overthrow the government of the oppressor Chinese. But even

if we have set ourselves free, can it be pleasing in the sight of our God if we only stand and watch, while you, our brethren in religion . . . still hear the bloody grievance of subjection to the black politics of the oppressor Government of the savage Chinese? Certainly our God would not be satisfied. We will not throw down our arms until we have made you free from the five bloody fingers of the Chinese oppressors' power, nor until the very roots of the Chinese oppressors' government have dried and died away from the face of the earth of East Turkestan, which we have inherited as our native land from our fathers and our grandfathers. (Benson 1990, 45–46)

There are slightly differing views on the question as to what degree the 1940s' revolt was a genuine Turkic nationalist movement seeking independence, or at least autonomy, and to what degree it was a result of Soviet manipulation aimed at destabilization of the KMT's rule in Xinjiang. In her thoroughly researched work, which is the most informative source on the insurgency, Linda Benson interpreted it as a nationalist attempt at founding the ETR, an independent Muslim nationalist state of the mostly Turkic Muslim population of northern Xinjiang (1990, 3, 41, 145, 152). She also perceived the most prominent leader of the movement, Ekhmetjan Qasimi (1912–49), as a Turkic nationalist intent on establishing a democratic, Muslim-majority government in Xinjiang (1990, 141). In her view, the most influential Turkic political body of the Three Districts was the “highly nationalistic” East Turkestan Youth Party (in sources researched in this book, this body is referred to as the East Turkestan Revolutionary Youth Organization [*Sherqiy Türkistan Inqilabiy Yashlar Teshkilati*, ETRYO]; 1990, 151; 1992, 38), which was in favor of establishing an independent East Turkestan and acted also in the KMT-controlled districts. In Benson's opinion, the insurgency necessarily depended on Soviet tacit consent and support, as well as on simultaneous noninterference from the Soviets and the absence of Soviet support to the KMT provincial government (1990, 5, 34, 40, 137). While acknowledging that there might have been some Soviet support for the insurgency in the form of advisors or military units (1990, 138–42), Benson argued that the ETR policy implementation did not show an exaggerated Soviet influence and that the Soviets probably acted rather as a conservative force, which sought to reduce the insurgency's nationalist drive in latter stages of the movement and urged the rebels to reconcile with the provincial government. Despite this pressure, Benson claims the ETR symbolized the independent Islamic state's dream of uniting its Turkic population under a democratic government (1990, 152–54).

Similarly, while Laura Newby admitted that Soviet influence and socialist ideas had by the mid-1940s deeply permeated the Ili insurgency, and the ETR showed clear signs of Sovietization, she also claimed that the nationalist movement

was not merely a tool for Soviet strategy; resistance from within cannot be ruled out as an important factor in discouraging the Soviet Union from helping the Kuldja group to carry the separatist movement to final victory with the liberation of all Sinkiang. (Newby 1986, 161)

Acquiescence to Soviet pressures should then be interpreted as political foresight by moderates dominating the movement, who understood eastern Turkestan's precarious position between two ideologically opposed powers (Newby 1986, 227–30). Roostam Sadri on the other hand concluded in his article that the liberation struggles of all ethnic groups of eastern Turkestan fell victim to the USSR as well as the KMT and PRC-controlled China's consensus over their common geopolitical interests at the expense of the interests and will of Xinjiang's indigenous peoples (311–13). Similarly, Allen Whiting acknowledged the formidable influence of the USSR over the matter, but also pointed out the indigenous groups' liberation struggle as an aspect of the movement (Whiting and Sheng 1958, 110–11).

Other studies argued that the Soviet role was much stronger. Although Andrew Forbes claimed that the degree of Soviet involvement is impossible to assess, he thoroughly described Soviet support through the supply of military and organizational training, weaponry, logistics, advisory personnel, and allegedly even some direct military action. He even paralleled the USSR's involvement in the ETR to Soviet interventions in Iran, which led to the emergence of the Muslim secessionist puppet statelets of the Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan and the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad in 1945 (Forbes 1986, 177–78, 261–63). Soviet involvement in the affair was also related to the fact that the USSR did not look favorably at the assumption of power by the U.S.-supported, nationalist KMT in its volatile borderland, and therefore, could benefit from an insurgency that compromised the authority of the Xinjiang provincial government. It was again the pivotal position of Xinjiang at the crossroads of world power politics that influenced its fate. In Forbes' view, Elikhan Töre's "Turko-Islamic" wing was gradually out-maneuvered by a Soviet-supported "progressive" wing that sought to establish a secular, pro-Soviet secessionist state. Several figures of the "progressive" group were trained and organized in the Soviet Union prior to the uprising. A Xinjiang Turkic People's National

Liberation Committee was established in Almaty in 1943 with the goal of generating opposition to the Sheng-KMT regime and eventually became the most influential structure in the insurgency, through which the USSR successfully propelled the insurgency in the direction it desired (Forbes 1986, 173–74). Headed by Ekhmetjan Qasimi, who, according to Forbes, was most probably “Stalin’s man” in the movement, this group included also Abdukerim Abbasov (?–1949), Ishaq Beg (Kyrgyz, 1903–49), and Seypidin Ezizi (Uyghur, 1915–2003; 177–86).

Forbes showed that the armistice of the summer of 1945 between the INA and provincial troops was also reached due to direct pressure from the Soviet Union on the ETR to stop their imminent advance on Urumchi. The USSR exerted this effort in the wake of signing the Yalta Agreement of February 1945, which also stipulated that the USSR stop interfering in Xinjiang in exchange for regaining its privileges in northeastern China. During lengthy negotiations between the two sides, the Ili leaders agreed to abandon their separatist goals and cease to refer to the insurgent territory as to the ETR,⁸ while the KMT promised to grant autonomy, inspired by the Ili model, to the entire Xinjiang. The talks concluded in June 1946 by signing a peace agreement and forming a coalition government that consisted of the insurgent appointees, provincial appointees, and central government appointees (Forbes 1986, 177–86). Elikhan Töre himself was forcibly transported to the Soviet Union shortly after signing the peace agreement, where he was held under house arrest in Tashkent until his death in 1976. According to Forbes, the Soviets thus managed to harness the uprising, its initial Turko-Islamic overtone evaporating by the summer of 1945 (186–95). As pointed out by Linda Benson, by recognizing Xinjiang as part of China while insisting on its political autonomy, the Three Districts’ delegates moved closer to that of the Three Gentlemen, although these were, as will be shown later in this section, continuously vilified by the Three Districts’ propaganda.

The coalition government effectively collapsed in the summer of 1947, the Three Districts’ delegates retreated to Ili, and northern Xinjiang was administered as an independent territory until communist takeover in 1949. During this period, the key political organization in control of the Three Districts was the

8 On the topic of East Turkestan’s independence, Ekhmetjan Qasimi is said by several sources to have proclaimed in August 1946, that although East Turkestan was a geographical name, it could not be regarded as a political movement theory. He also denounced the idea of Xinjiang’s secession at several other occasions. The shelving of the original objective of East Turkestan’s independence was interpreted as a realistic assessment of Xinjiang’s geopolitical position between two powerful neighbors (Benson 1992, 34, 41, 43).

Union for Support of Peace and Democracy in Xinjiang (*Xinjiangda Tinchliqni we Khelqchilikni Himaye Qilish Ittipaqi*; USPDx), which integrated several other bodies, such as the ETRYO, and “despite the name, was the party behind Ghulja’s one-party system” (Millward 200, 223). The USPDx’s main publication organ was *Forward* (*Algha*), while other contemporary Turkic publications included the *People’s Voice* (*Khelq Awazi*), *Revolutionary Youth* (*Inqilabi Yashlar*), *Democrat* (*Khelqchi*), *New Path* (*Yéngi Yol*), *Örnek* (*Mirror*), *Women’s Voice* (*Khanim-Qizlar Awazi*), *Mirror of Knowledge* (*Bilim Örneşi*), *Unity* (*Birlik*), and *Union* (*Ittipaq*; Xu 1994, 80–81). At the same time, presumably with more Soviet assistance than what could be described as mere blessings, the USPDx constructed an agenda that was very much in accordance with the USSR’s policy of supporting the ROC’s principle of territorial indivisibility (Benson 1990, 152).

The interpretation of the insurgency as a Soviet scheme can be also found in contemporary central government and KMT materials. Benson already pointed out that in contemporary sources close to the central government, the insurgency figured as the “Ili Incident” (伊犁事件 *Yílí shìjiàn*; occasionally also the “Yining Incident” 伊寧事件 *Yīníng shìjiàn*, a reference to the Chinese name for the city of Ghulja) and was seen as a consequence of Soviet imperialist intrigue (1990, 4–5; 1992, 23). It is again useful to refer to Zhang Dajun’s work because it presents a very good example of the KMT view of the insurgency. While acknowledging that the discontent of indigenous nationalities in Xinjiang was to a large degree caused by the incompetency of KMT officials, he places the greatest part of guilt on the USSR, who supported the “treachery of Ili native nationalities” (伊犁土著民族叛變 *Yílí tǔzhù mínzú pànbàn*). The previous Soviet support of Sheng and all other Han ruling elites was described by Zhang as a cover for its “intrusive behavior” (侵略行為 *qīnlüè xíngwéi*), while the subsequent change to supporting the rebels was caused by the improvement of China’s standing toward the end of the Sino-Japanese War. Soviet support to the “native nationalities’ revolutionary movement” (土著民族的革命運動 *tǔzhù mínzú de géming yùndòng*) antagonized the actions of the central government and the rebels. The initial stage of the rebellion occurred under the flag of nationalism and leadership of characters such as Elikhan Töre, a fanatically nationalistic element demanding “self-determination and autonomy” (自決自治 *zìjué zìzhì*). This group was subsequently replaced by communists, such as Qasimi and Ezizi. Zhang refers to the insurgency as “treachery” (背叛 *bèipàn*), an “incident” (事件 *shìjiàn*), “coup” (事變 *shìbiàn*), “rebellion” (叛亂 *pànlùn*), or even “fake Turkestan People’s Republic” (偽東土耳其斯坦人民共和國 *wěi Tūrǔqísītǎn rénmin gònghéguó*), which are all expressions with connotations of illegal and illegitimate activity (Zhang 1980, 6243–50, 6527). A similar interpretation of the events was presented by David Wang, who concentrated on

illustrating the intensity and scope of Soviet involvement. In his interpretation, the Ili Regime was a feudal Muslim nationalist regime which was encouraged, supported, and controlled by the Soviet Union. The initial goal of the movement, establishing a Muslim state under the rule of pan-Islamists, was manipulated for its own purposes by the Soviets and finally by the CPC's propaganda (1999, 167–72, 321–36, 407–18).

Some of the PRC historiographical studies reiterate a comment of Mao Zedong (毛泽东; 1893–1976)—that the ETR insurgency was “a part of our all-China people's democratic revolutionary movement” (我全中国人民民主革命运动的一部分 *wǒ quán Zhōngguó rénmin mínzhǔ géming yùndòng de yī bùfēn*; Xu 1998, 259). The whole movement is hailed by today's communist propaganda as the “Three Districts' Revolution” (三区革命 *Sānqū géming*; in reference to the three northern districts of Altay, Tarbaghatay, and Ili). Today's CPC asserts that the Three Districts' Revolution was supported by Soviet communists through international diplomatic pressure; propaganda (which to some degree contained also erroneous ideas that were in conflict with the concept of the unity of the motherland); the formation and support of secret organizations; the training of leading figures in ideology and military skills; the supply of equipment, advisors, and occasional manpower; and other subversive activities (Xu 1994, 13–14). However, according to Chinese historiography, the most decisive force behind the success of the Three Districts' Revolution was the CPC's support from interior China. The insurgency, as well as the national question itself, is seen as a part of mankind's social evolution and development, namely the struggle against “imperialistic, feudal, and bureaucratic-capitalist reactionary rule” (帝国主义, 封建主义, 官僚资本主义的反动统治 *dìguó zhǔyì, fēngjiàn zhǔyì, guānliáo zībēn zhǔyì fǎndòng tǒngzhì*) of the KMT. After some mistakes were made in the initial stage of the uprising by separatist elements, such as Elikhan Töre, the movement was steered in the right direction by Qasimi, Abbasov, and other politically conscious figures. However, by far the most important factor was the fact that the revolutionary movement of all people of China under the leadership of the CPC surged day by day and weakened the KMT's rule. It was specifically the Han people who made up the main force of all the victorious nationalities of China and thus made the most significant contribution to the success of the Three Districts' Revolution (Xu 1994, 18, 259–66).

Similar interpretations of the movement resound also in some memoirs of participants of contemporary events. Seydulla Seypullayov, who held a senior official post during the insurgency, claimed that the movement was Soviet-supported, nonseparatist, and strove to implement policies analogous to those of the CPC in the interior. He used the term “Three Districts' Revolution” (*Üch*

Wilayet Inqilabi) and claimed that the designation East Turkestan carried only geographical connotations. Although the initial purpose of the revolt was to liberate the people of East Turkestan, secession was not among its goals. According to Seypullayov, the reason why the policies of the Three Districts' administration could not have been referred to as communist and Marxist-Leninist at the time was because of the strong religiosity of a large part of the local population. Nevertheless, the administration was allegedly highly sympathetic to the success of the communist movement in interior China and prepared the Three Districts for eventual takeover by the CPC (Seypullayov 2005, 25–27, 34, 45, 49, 68–69).

Burhan Shehidi's memoir did not systematically approach the issue of Soviet involvement in the insurgency. However, he remarked that revolutionarily minded individuals, such as Qasimi and Abbasov, with early communist ideas were one of three ideological elements present in the Three Districts' government (the other two being bourgeois and feudally religious representatives) and presented anecdotal evidence of the influence of the Soviet consulate in the province. According to him, the initial ideological mistakes of the insurgency were promptly corrected by representatives who had under Qasimi's leadership adopted a Marxist-Leninist viewpoint and taken control of the Three Districts' administration (Burhan 1986, 606–8). The interpretation of Seypidin Ezizi, a high-ranking Three Districts' official who—after the mysterious deaths of other insurgent leaders—met with Mao Zedong in Beijing and allied the region with the PRC in September 1949, is in a similar tone. Although he regards Soviet help and assistance as one of the vital agents in the insurgency (Ezizi 1997b, 368–70) and in many places presents anecdotal evidence of a Soviet hand in the events (28–33); nevertheless, he interprets the whole insurgency as “a part of the New Democratic revolution” (*Yéngi Démokratik inqilabining bir qismidir*) of China's proletariat (400–6). According to him, the influence of the CPC in Xinjiang and its indoctrination of the local population with communist and Marxist ideology were factors as important as the revolutionary zeal of Xinjiang's oppressed peoples (24–28, 363–68).

Discourse of Nation and National Interest in the Three Districts

All of the above-mentioned authors implied that the less nationalistic, less pan-Turkist, and less Islamist creed, which was more compatible with Soviet and Chinese communist principles, gradually gained prominence in the ideology of the Three Districts. Establishing friendly relations with the Soviet Union had already been one of the main principles of the so-called Ghulja Declaration, a rebel manifesto issued in January 1945 (Forbes 1986, 183). The national question was also addressed in two other rebel pamphlets from 1945 and 1947,

respectively, which were previously publicized by Linda Benson. East Turkestan and Central Asia were perceived by their authors as the heart of the Turkic national territory, where the Uyghurs, Taranchis, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and Tatars had lived since ancient times. The Turkic nationalities were devout Muslims with God on their side in their struggle for a free Muslim East Turkestan State and who would punish the oppressors. There were also Mongols and Russians, now living peacefully in the region, whose homeland was also not China. All of these groups were considered the true masters of East Turkestan. After the arrival of the Chinese, local people were robbed of their civilization and even prevented from referring to their homeland by its real name. During Sheng Shicai's government, a truly cruel oppression was instituted. Therefore, the insurgents were demanding the termination of Chinese rule and immigration, institution of an equality of nationalities, representative government, autonomy, national armed forces, education, and other revolutionary political ideals. The insurgents were specifically intent on achieving democracy, justice, and liberty. Notably, reestablishing friendly relations with the USSR in the spheres of commerce and politics was perceived as an absolutely indispensable precondition to achieving these ideals (Benson 1990, 200–208). Indeed, the Soviets were perceived as patrons of the Xinjiang people:

The people of East Turkestan [Xinjiang] are like an orphaned child, without father or mother or anyone to heed its cries. The savage Chinese have torn the child from the mother that bore it (the Soviet Government) and seek to give it to a foster mother (the Three People's Principles) for the latter to trample it under foot. For the people of East Turkestan the severance of their mutually friendly relations with the Soviet Union and their subjection to the discipline of the Three People's Principles by the savage Chinese is the same thing as death by torture. (Benson 1990, 204)

The sources written in the Uyghur language examined below seem to indicate that the less Turko-Islamic and more pro-Soviet ideological orientation of the Three Districts' Revolution also brought about a change in the Three Districts' official discourse of nation and nationalism. Examples of this trend can be found for instance in the pamphlet, *We Are Ready to Defend Our Rights Acquired at the Blood Price* (*Qan Bedelige Kelgen Hoquqimizni Himaye Qilishqa Teyyarbiz*). The text was authored jointly by the ETRYO and the Seven Districts Democrats' Association (*Yette Wilayet Khelqchilar Birleshmisi*),⁹ and

⁹ "Seven districts" means the nonrevolutionary part of Xinjiang, administered by the provincial government.

published most likely in Ghulja by the Free People (*Erkin Khelq*) publishing house shortly after the collapse of the Xinjiang coalition government in the summer of 1947. The text condemns the KMT authorities' nonadherence to the program of the Xinjiang coalition government and voices the strong determination of the Three Districts to defend the program regardless of the coalition's dissolution. The text starts in the name of God with the following passage:

The people of East Turkestan (*Sherqiy Türkistan khelqi*) have put up numerous revolutionary struggles, in particular the revolution of November 12, against the reactionary government's evil policy of oppression, enslavement, robbery, exploitation, assimilation, upholding backwardness, and creating inequality in order to acquire freedom (*erkinlik*), equality (*baraberlik*), and democracy (*khelqchilik*), and signed the Eleven Point Treaty which guarantees equality, freedom, and democracy and, according to the treaty, formed a democratic provincial government (*khelqchil ölkülük hökümet*). (ETRYO 1947, 1)

The pamphlet further criticizes the "reactionary" (*eksilheriketchi*) KMT administration for sabotaging the government's actions. The oppression in the KMT-administered seven districts of Xinjiang increased, essential rights guaranteed to the people by the treaty were violated, and many prominent local figures were imprisoned. The government did not appoint to high posts those who were determined to do "people work" (*khelq khizmiti*). Instead, it appointed those who hindered the program, thieves, bribers, those who "sell out the homeland" (*weten satquchi*), and "position-hungry traitors" (*mensepperest munafiq*), who all jointly increased the tyranny. Instead of allowing "freedom of publication" (*metbu'at hürlüğü*) and "freedom of speech" (*söz hürlüğü*), the government terminated many existing periodicals and started publishing reactionary and fascist press. In Urumchi alone, martial law was enforced and thousands of people were imprisoned. When Three Districts' appointees to the provincial government sought to enact the government program, they heard only "*míngtiān, hòutiān*" (明天, 後天; Chinese for tomorrow, day after tomorrow). The "Three Districts' people's liberation troops" (*Üch Wilayet khelq azadliq qisimliri*) were supposed to be included in the regular provincial army but had not been receiving provincial government's money since October 1946. Funds for official and educational expenses in the Three Districts were also withheld by the provincial government. Although the "Three Districts' people's representatives" (*üch wilayet khelq wekilliri*) took part in provincial administrative duties, they were not able to overcome the KMT reactionaries. Therefore, in accordance with Ekhmetjan Qasimi's statement, the Three Districts' delegates found it unsuitable to remain in the provincial government and resigned:

[I]n a place where the treaty is enforced, we are also present. We are not present in a place where the treaty is not enforced. If people's demands are fulfilled, we will be a part of provincial government. If people's demands are not fulfilled, from that day we will not be a part of provincial government. (ETRYO 1947, 215)

The text further reprimanded the KMT for supporting Osman Batur, who was referred to in the text as "Osman the Robber" (*Osman Bandit*), because he had turned against the Three Districts' administration in early 1946. Osman was portrayed as a person who had damaged the revolution by twisting the "revolutionary nature" (*inqilabiy kharaktér*) of the "people's uprising" (*khelq qozghilingi*) in Altay into banditry. Since Osman was fighting "those who were struggling for religion, for homeland, and for the people" (*din üchün, weten üchün, khelq üchün küresh qilghuchi*), he should not in fact have been considered a Muslim. The text also proclaimed that regardless of the KMT's support to Osman, "our national army troops" (*milliy armiyе qisimlirimiz*) would fight Osman "in unity with our people" (*khelqimiz bilen birlikte*; ETRYO 1947, 14–22). Altogether, the people of the Three Districts would have the duty to fight by all means necessary against exploitation and tyranny, as well as for reinforcement of the peace agreement in the whole territory of Xinjiang. The ultimate goal of the Three Districts' administration was "peace based on true democracy, equality, and freedom" (*heqiqiy khelqchilik, baraberlik we erkinlik asaidiki tinchlik*):

We, the people of Three Districts, who are fighting for liberation (*azadliq*), freedom (*erkinlik*), equality (*baraberlik*), and democracy (*khelqchilik*), will not yield to Osman nor to any reactionaries plotting against us by arming and shielding him. We will strike those who will try to ignite the fire of conflict and start a war; we will continue our fight for truly democratic politics (*heqiqiy khelqchiliq siyaset*) based on the peace agreement, as well as for peace (*tinchliq*) based on true parity and equality (*heqiqiy tenglik we baraberlik*). Our cause is truthful (*heq*), and truth (*heqiqet*) definitely indicates victory. Reactionaries will surely be punished by history for their disgraceful crimes. (ETRYO 1947, 23)

We do not love false peace and false democracy. We will not let go from our hands the rights that we gained, nor will we let go the life of true peace and democracy for which the people of Three Districts have spilled their blood. It is necessary to strengthen and preserve such peace and democracy by all means. . . . We have acquired human rights and a life of equality, democracy, and freedom by such means. And by these means, we will preserve and strengthen our human rights and our life of equality,

democracy, and freedom. Let reactionaries disappear! Hail our people's freedom! (ETRYO 1947, 26–28)

The pamphlet's rhetoric is also useful for the examination of the extent of nationalism, or the Soviet nature, of the ETR. Throughout its whole text, the words “nation” (*millet*) and “national” (*milliy*) were almost completely replaced by the term “people” (*khelq*). Formulations using national terminology are rather isolated and feature only fixed expressions (such as “National Army”). When used, the word “national” (*milliy*) carries the connotations of a single nationality or ethnic group living in the multinational Three Districts. These connotations were moreover not necessarily perceived in a positive way:

But the people of East Turkestan have no more patience left with the excessively evil policy of reactionary totalitarian elements. By means of the November 12 liberation revolution (*azadliq inqilabi*), they have acquired today's life of freedom (*erkinlik hayat*) and human rights (*insaniy hoquq*). Our East Turkestan is a part of the world, and our people are a part of people of the world. Therefore, just like people of the world, we also love peace and democracy. But we love true peace and true democracy. In the kind of peace we love, it is necessary not to yield to bandits, terrorists, gossipers, militarists, and those who verbally support peace but in reality are igniting the fire of conflict. In the kind of democracy we love, it is necessary not to yield to reactionaries, tyrants, conservatives, those favoring supremacy of one nationality (*millet*), position-hungry flatterers who kiss up to the bureaucracy, bribers, and treacherous rulers who are democrats only in speech or on paper. In the kind of peace that we want, it is necessary to promote and enforce equality, freedom, true democracy, and progressivity. (ETRYO 1947, 25–26)

The increased prominence of the term “people” at the expense of the term “nation” as the concept of communal identity in the Three Districts is also apparent in the *Appeal to All Our Muslims of East Turkestan from the East Turkestan Central Religious Supervision* (*Sherqiy Türkistandiki Barliq Musulmanlirimizgha Sherqiy Türkistan Merkizi Dinniye Nazaratidin Muraj'et*; here abbreviated as *Appeal*), which was a pamphlet issued by the Religious Supervision (*Dinniye Nazariti*; RS) in Ghulja in 1948 and printed by the printing house of an influential Three Districts' newspaper, *Revolutionary East Turkestan* (*Inqilabiy Sherqi Türkistan*; RET). Besides explaining the fundamental principles of Islam, the text elaborated on the role of religion in the Three Districts. It stressed the social function of religion in facilitating “unity and union” (*birlik we ittifaqliq*)

as well as the progress and well-being of the “Muslim people” (*Musulman khelq*) of the Three Districts: “That is to say that not only are religion and civilization not contrary to each other, both of them are even compatible components that guide society toward progress” (RS 1948, 5). One passage asserted that one of the functions of religion is to uphold the state structure (20). The text articulated four important appeals to Muslims by the Three Districts’ administration: to preserve the unity of all Muslims in the region, to establish “friendly love” (*dostane muhebbet*) among all previously exploited groups living in the “historical homeland” (*tarikhiy weten*), for clerics to use the religion in a truthful and nonpolitical way to cultivate people’s ethical qualities, and for the people themselves to strive for their spiritual and ethical improvement according to the principles of Islam (70–72). If these calls were heard, then after having attained freedom, the “society” (*jemi’et*) of the Three Districts would also see reform and progress (77).

The *Appeal* also strongly denounced the politicization of religion by the KMT in the remaining part of Xinjiang. The text particularly claimed that clerics in the south had to supplement their one word on religion by fifty words on the Three People’s Principles and to include verbal support of the KMT and its ideology into their sermons, which had to be previously approved by the state officials (RS 76–77). In contrast, the pamphlet declared that there was full freedom of Islamic worship in the Three Districts. For more than three years, the religious affairs had been successfully run by the RS authority, which provided for satisfying the religious needs of the people, the religious education of youth and clergy, and the construction of mosques and religious schools, as well as for their “reform” (*islahat*). At the same time, there was a complete separation of religion from politics in the Three Districts, which enabled complete freedom of religion (73–77).

Similar to the *We Are Ready to Defend Our Rights Acquired at the Blood Price*, the *Appeal* used the word “nation” extremely rarely. The insurgency was invariably and in absolutely every instance called the “national liberation rebellion” (*milliy azadliq inqilabi*; RS 54, 67). Other contexts featuring the national concept were, for example, the interpretation of the Three Districts’ Revolution as “work for religion” (*din khizmiti*), “work for homeland” (*weten khizmiti*), and “work for nation” (*millet khizmiti*; 62); an honorary address of a prominent religious figure as “nation worker” (*millet khadimi*; 49); or awareness of the existence of the individual “nationalities” (*millet*) of the Three Districts (17). However, this use of the national terminology was both rare and almost ritualized. In an overwhelming majority of cases, the community inhabiting the Three Districts was defined as “people” (*khelq*). The term “East Turkestan” was used in a strictly geographical sense, such as in the title of the work or

in formulations about “Han intruders occupying our beautiful homeland, East Turkestan” (13, 22). The expression “people of East Turkestan” (*Sherqiy Türkistan khelqi*) appeared as frequently as “people of the Three Districts” (*Üch Wilayet khelqi*). There were also references to the existence of an “independent East Turkestan state” (*musteqil Sherqiy Türkistan döliti*; 56) or “our previous famous state” (*bizning burunqi ataqliq dölitimiz*; 71). However, these instances were used strictly when speaking about the past. In the present, the geographical entity called East Turkestan housed a political structure called the “Three Districts” (*Üch Wilayet*) or “our districts” (*bizning wilayetlirimiz*; 67). The problem of the Three Districts being or not being independent of China was not addressed at all in the *Appeal*.

The enemies of the national liberation revolution were called “Chinese tyrants” (*Khitay mustebitliri*) or “Chinese reactionaries” (*Khitay eksilhérik-etichiliri*) in the *Appeal*. In other words, the text emphasized their incompetence and place of origin, not their ethnicity. Another phenomenon allegedly jeopardizing the revolution was the disunity of the various groups in the Three Districts. The text alerted the people of the Three Districts not to yield to the “sabotage” (*buzghunchilik*) of the reactionaries, who were trying to implant “separatism” (*bölgünchilik*) and “antagonism” (*ziddiylik*) among the “nationalities” (*milletler*). Thus, defending the interest of an individual nationality was seen as outrightly detrimental. In fact, “national antagonisms” (*milliy ziddiylik*) had already been the cause of the decline of the region in the past (66, 70–71). Instead, the people of the Three Districts should form a unity, regardless of any kind of partial interest, in order to attain “liberty and freedom” (*azadliq we erkinlik*) and “well-being” (*sa’adet*):

Thank God that now in our districts (*bizning bu wilayetlirimizde*), all the people became one soul and one body (*bir jan bir ten bolup*) and staged national liberation revolution against slavery (*qulluq*). (67; also 17, 19)

The decreased frequency of the use of national terminology is also discernible by reading the 1947 and 1948 issues of the *Revolutionary East Turkestan* (*Inqilabiy Sherqi Türkistan*; *RET*), one of the chief propaganda organs of the Three Districts (Forbes 1986, 185). From one point of view, the discourse of the *Revolutionary East Turkestan* is again similar to that of the nationalistic periodicals of the 1930s examined in Chapter 3:

The essential goal (*asasiy mekhsed*) of the national liberation movement (*milliy azadliq hérikiti*) that has been occurring incessantly for centuries in our homeland, East Turkestan, is to preserve our race, to continue our

history, to advance the prosperity of our homeland, to develop a modern and progressive national education (*milliy ma'arip*), and to exist in the same way as nations in democratic and civilized states (*dölet*) of the world are existing. (*RET* 35: 1)

Similar to the two texts analyzed above, the *Revolutionary East Turkestan* articles used the words “nation” (*millet*) and “national” (*milliy*) rarely, while the context in which these terms were used was also very specific. For instance the armed forces of the Three Districts were called the Ili National Army (*Ili Milliy Armīye*) or East Turkestan National Army (*Sherqiy Türkistan Milliy Armīye*; *RET* 26: 3). The term East Turkestan was still perceived as the only suitable historical and geographical name for the whole province (*RET* 33: 1; 45: 1; 151: 1), and there also existed the notion that East Turkestan was inhabited by several “nationalities” (*milletler*; *RET* 35: 1). References to independent state in East Turkestan were strictly limited to contexts when speaking about the past (*RET* 26: 3), while the issue of the present political independence of the Three Districts of China was ignored. On the contrary, the frequent use of the term Xinjiang implied that the Three Districts were still perceived as a part of China. The present insurgency was termed the “national liberation movement” (*milliy azadliq hërikiti*) or “national liberation revolution” (*milliy azadliq inqilabi*) of November 12, in which “all people of Ili” (*pütün Ili khelqi*) took part (26: 3; 231: 3; 203: 1). The name of a particular high school in Ghulja was the Ili Nationalities’ Grammar School (*Ili Milletler Gimnaziyisi*), and its mission was to educate children of various “nationalities” (*milletler*; 151: 3). The insurgency in southern Xinjiang in the 1930s was referred to as a “national liberation struggle” (*milliy azadliq küresh*) joined by those “whose heart had been agitated for the sake of homeland, nation, and religion” (*weten millet din üchün jan köydürüdigghan kishi*; 195: 1). In the present, neighboring Soviet Central Asian nationalities, themselves closely related to the people of East Turkestan, were living in republics that were suitable to their “national specifics” (*milliy khususiyetlik*). The republics formed a “union” (*ittipaq*) of “independent national republics” (*musteqil milliy jumhuriyet*) on the basis of “friendship” (*dostluq*) and “cooperation” (*hemkarlik*; 151: 1). Similarly, union and friendship among the peoples of the Three Districts was seen as the essential principle of functional society, while separatism and nationalism was a negative and undesirable phenomenon that needed to be eradicated (205: 2) because “the disease of nationalism (*milletchilik késili*) destroys the friendship among nationalities (*milletler ara dostluqi*), is the cause of weakening of their strength, and opens avenues for enemy conspiracies” (25: 1).

The word nation was almost always replaced in *Revolutionary East Turkestan* by the term people of the Three Districts (*Üch Wilayet khelqi*), “East Turkestani people” (*Sherqiy Türkistan khelqi*; *RET* 35: 1), or occasionally by the term “the public” (*amma*; 36: 2). Local ethnic groups were largely not referred to by the term nationality. Instead, terms such as “brothers” (*qérindash*; 144: 3) or “peoples” (*khelqler*; 26: 3; 173: 1; 177: 1) were used in discussions of the respective peoples and their affairs, such as the functioning of cultural associations (151: 3). “Enemies” (*düşmenler*) of the insurgency consisted of “reactionary elements” (*eksilhériketchi unsurlar*; 26: 3), which could be of any, unspecified nationality, not explicitly Han or Tungan. The most important social objectives, or “people’s interests” (*khelq menpe’iti*), of the insurgency were “democracy” (*khelqchilik*), “equality” (*baraberlik*), “freedom” (*erkinlik*), and “people’s happiness and well-being” (*khelq bekhti-sa’aditi*; 36: 2; 173: 4; 214: 3). Ekhmetjan Qasimi was titled “our democratic leader” (*khelqchil rehberimiz*; 177: 3), while the leadership were seen as legitimate “representatives of all strata of the people of the whole province” (*pütün ölke khelqining her qatlamdiki wekilliri*) and inclusive of “progressive persons” (*tereqqiperwer ademler*) and “democratic intellectuals” (*khelqchil ziyalilar*; 177: 1). The aim of revolutionary struggle was to do away with “superstition” (*khurapatlik*), “illiteracy” (*jahaletlik*), and “ignorance” (*nadanqliq*) engendered by the oppression of the reactionary Urumchi government and previous administrations, which obstructed “civilization” (*medeniyyet*) and “progress” (*tereqqiyat*; 26: 3). The articles in *Revolutionary East Turkestan* frequently described the effective functioning of “democratic education” (*khelqchil ma’arip*), the opening of libraries, appeals to the people to assist peasants with harvesting crops, political activity in the region, and similar activities. Great importance was attached to the physical education of the people, because only in a healthy body can there be a healthy mind, and only with a healthy body can the homeland and the people be strong. The physical health of the people was, in fact, declared a very important responsibility of the liberated administration (224: 1). In agriculture, laxity in the struggle against locusts was the same as laxity in the struggle against enemies (151: 1). Several articles also mentioned political and military courses being integrated into school curricula (36: 1; 147: 3; 214: 1; 215: 1). Treacherous officials like the Three Gentlemen were portrayed as puppets in the hands of the KMT, which was using them to fragment “people’s strength” (*khelqning küchi*) “in order to entirely annihilate our lineage” (*nesilimizni pütünley yoqitish üçün*; 208: 1).

The news coverage of the *Revolutionary East Turkestan* often addressed the revolutionary struggle of oppressed peoples against imperialism throughout the world. The USSR was seen as a patron of the anticolonial, “national

liberation movement" (*milliy azadliq h rikiti*) of "peoples" (*khelqler*) throughout the world (*RET* 151: 2; 248: 3). Considerable attention was devoted to the victories of the CPC's People's Liberation Army (*Khelq Azadliq Arm yisi*) over the KMT troops in a civil war in China proper (200: 1; 201: 1; 202: 3). Turkey was portrayed as a reactionary country that sided with Germany during the World War II (248: 3). The paper also reported on uncovering a reactionary spy ring in Czechoslovakia, which was linked with the Catholic Church and involved in antistate activities and propaganda, or on the arrival of the Czechoslovakian people's delegates on a state visit to Moscow in 1948. The paper also welcomed the communist coup of February of 1948 in Czechoslovakia (200: 2) and the selection of communist leader Kim Il-sung (1912–94) as the chairman of the Korean people's democratic government in September 1948 (222: 2). The Soviet Red Army Day (February 23) was designated a festive occasion (41: 2), while elections in Soviet Central Asian republics were also closely covered (38: 1). Unlike in the capitalist countries where well-being was available only for certain social strata, all the people of the Soviet Union could allegedly benefit from progress and civilization, according to the *Revolutionary East Turkestan* (27: 1). The Soviet Union was also seen as instrumental in bringing civilization to Xinjiang, for instance by running the Uyghur, Uzbek, Tatar, Russian, and Chinese movie club free of charge at the Ghulja consulate (140: 4).

An interesting perspective can be also found in the anthology, *Poems* (*Sh 'irlar*), written by Uyghur Son (*Uyghur Oghli*), which is obviously the penname of a still unknown author. The collection of twenty-four predominantly lyrical poems was published in Almaty in 1948 by the printing house of the *Kazak Land* (*Qazaq  li*) journal, one of the periodicals through which the Soviet Union was seeking to assist and steer the revolutionary movement in the Three Districts. *Kazak Land* and other such Soviet Central Asian periodicals, for instance *Oriental Truth* (*Sherq Heqiqiti*) or *New Life* (*Y ngi Hayat*),¹⁰ were sent directly from Soviet Central Asia to the Three Districts and surrounding areas (Seypullayov 2005, 29; Tursun 2008, 90). Although the degree of social penetration of ideas presented in the anthology is not certain, the poems are an interesting exemplification of the direction in which the Soviet authorities sought to disseminate political values within the Three Districts. The poems in the collection are dated between 1937 and 1947 and were written in a very basic Uyghur vernacular, set out in an almost fully phonetic script.

10 Not to be mistaken for the periodical of the same name published during Sheng Shicai's administration in Kashgar in 1934–37 (see Chapter 3). At the same time, it is likely that the title of the Soviet periodical deliberately sought to invoke the continuity of Sheng's pro-Soviet New Xinjiang deal and the Three Districts' policies.

Therefore, it can be assumed that the anthology targeted the rather younger readership of the lower popular strata, which had just recently emerged from the darkness of illiteracy. The poems were perhaps also intended to aid citizens in learning to write and read or to influence citizens present at public poetry readings. Vernacularization of the historically elite genre of poetry was to openly manifest the Soviets' promotion of popular culture and modernization of the whole society.

Topics of the anthology's simple poems include school life, family affairs, relationships between children and their parents, revolutionary struggle, war for homeland, freedom, lyricism, and nature. The concepts of "homeland" (*weten*), "land" (*el*), and "people" (*khelq*) are the strongest notions in a number of poems (Uyghur Oghli 1948, 13–15, 21, 22). It was seen as patriotic to dedicate "one's life to the homeland" (*wetenge jan bérish*) or to die in a struggle for it and become a "people's hero" (*khelq qehrimani*; 23, 29, 34, 35–37, 38–40). The collection also featured translations of poems by Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837) and even by influential Tatar Jadidist poet Abdulla Toqay (1886–1913; 25, 26, 41, 42–43). There were also panegyrics on Moscow as the resting place of Lenin, who is seen as the father of Uyghur children, and on Stalin, who was perceived as the "fortune and representative of the people" (*khelq bekhti hem deputat*; 10, 13–15, 17–20). The territorial homeland was closely linked with Soviet administration and became "Soviet land" (*Sowét éli*). One poem also introduced the figure of Russian fairy tale hero Father Frost (*Qish Boway*; 16, 28). Central Asian nationalities were termed "peoples" (*khelq*) who were fighting like "brothers" (*aka-uka*) alongside Russians for great Russia (12, 35–37). Importantly for the central theme of this research, the word "nation" (*millet*) does not appear one single time in the collection.

The discourse of nation and nationalism in the above-examined sources of the Three Districts thus constituted a very significant development in modern Uyghur perceptions of communal identity and interest. It has been remarked above that to a certain extent, the Three Districts' discourse of national interest—namely, the righteous government of indigenous nationalities—resembled that of the ETIR and even that of the Three Gentlemen. On the other hand, propagandists of the Three Districts fully accepted the concept of Xinjiang's nationalities introduced by Sheng Shicai. In their discourse, the geographical entity "East Turkestan" was inhabited by several nationalities, each clearly defined and distinct from other nationalities. These nationalities jointly rose in a revolutionary liberation movement to overthrow the dysfunctional administration of the KMT in order to defend their interests in well-being, progress, and modernity. Similar to Sheng's theory and in sharp contrast to the nationalistic ideology of the ETIR and the KMT-affiliated Turkic nationalists,

the Three Districts' theoreticians rejected the idea of a single Turkic nation inhabiting its primordial and transstate homeland of Turkestan, of which East Turkestanis were an inseparable part. Instead, the above-examined ideology of the Three Districts viewed Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Taranchis, Uzbeks, and Tatars as separate nationalities living in the territory of East Turkestan. It appears that, unlike Sheng Shicai, the Three Districts' propagandists did not seem to be willing to devote a lot of effort to repeating the defining traits of individual Xinjiang nationalities or verbally mentioning their names, or even to mention the national idea, as such. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the phenomenon of decreasing the importance of national labels in northern Xinjiang was partially caused by the natural multiethnic composition of the region and resulted in the existence of a common Turkic language used in some periodicals. As asserted elsewhere, in the insurgency, "[A] united front of the peoples of Eastern Turkestan was brought into existence, marking an unprecedented development in the nationalist movement of Sinkiang (Newby 1986, 148). Another reason for this reality might be that by the early 1940s, Sheng's pattern of Xinjiang nationalities had possibly taken root among Xinjiang Turkic intellectuals and so did not need to be specifically reexplained. In East Turkestan, where until the 1920s even Turkic intellectuals did not perceive their community as a nation, Sheng's affirmative policies and indigenization in Xinjiang had the effect of a relatively quick consolidation of disparate modes of identification into national identities, and therefore, there was no need to repeatedly refer to them.

The shift of communal identification from nation and nationality to *people* in the late Three Districts' ideology is perhaps closely related to additional, more decisive agents—the anti-KMT, or antinationalist, cause of the Three Districts' Revolution and the intensity of Soviet involvement in it. Despite the fact that the terms "communism," "socialism," "Marxism," "Leninism," and other key concepts of Soviet ideology do not overtly appear in the texts above, the discourse of "people," as well as of "nation" and "nationalism," is similar to Soviet ethnic theory and practice, as aptly articulated in a section of the CPSU political program in 1961:

Nationalism is the chief political and ideological weapon used by international reaction and the remnants of the domestic reactionary forces against the unity of the socialist countries. Nationalist sentiments and national narrow-mindedness do not disappear automatically with the establishment of the social system. Nationalist prejudice and survivals of former national strife are a province in which resistance to social progress may be most protracted and stubborn, bitter, and insidious.

The Communists consider it their prime duty to educate the working people in a spirit of internationalism, socialist patriotism, and intolerance of all possible manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism. (Connor 1984, 477)

The content, vocabulary, and tilt of the materials analyzed above suggest that in a way highly similar to Soviet ethnic theory, the Three Districts' ideologists envisioned the nationalities of East Turkestan as a single people, merged by centripetal forces of unity, brotherhood, and friendship from several constituent nationalities. The people's ethnic identity existed and was acknowledged by the state but, in fact, did not matter much. Concepts such as the "struggle for the nation" or "national uprising," which were crucial cornerstones of nationalist ideology during the Turkic insurgency of the 1930s and for the KMT Turkic nationalists of the 1940s, yielded to ideas such as the "struggle for the people" and "people's uprising," while ideas such as "people's representatives" or "people's liberation troops" started to function with an unprecedented prominence. Similar to the Soviet Union (Connor 1984, 204–5), in the Three Districts, the dedication of one's loyalty to nationality instead of to a common identity of the people was ideologically incompatible with the direction of social evolution and gradually started to be viewed as reactionary, counterrevolutionary, and decisively negative. Subsequently, the administration engaged in systematic propaganda about the detrimental effects of nationalism. Portrayals of the Three Gentlemen and their nationalist associates reveal that reactionary elements were not defined by the Three Districts' propagandists on the basis of nationality and could even have been members of one's own nationality.

Although the word "class" (*sinip*) was not used in the Three Districts' texts, the emphasis on "people" and mentions of "strata," "social groups," and "reactionaries" reveals the administrators' conviction that, similar to the Soviet assertion, the most significant divisions among the populace were horizontal distinctions cutting across national groupings (Connor 1984, 5). Or, to paraphrase Ernst Gellner's famous "Wrong Address Theory," the Three Districts' propagandists seemed to believe that by delivering the "awakening message" to nationalities and not to people of all classes and strata, history or humanity made a grave mistake (Gellner 1983, 129). As in the Soviet Union (Martin 2001, 67–73), by eliminating antagonisms among nationalities, loyalties to northern Xinjiang ethnic groupings were expected to crumble and social differentiations and contradictions to be revealed. By furthering the interests of the people, namely democracy, equality, and freedom, the Three Districts' government was to create a modern and prospering society where national identity did not pose a significant issue. The national question—in Soviet polity

a “network of problems” arising from the existence of nations and nationalities (Connor 1984, xv)—would thus also cease to exist in the territory of East Turkestan. Moreover, the almost total absence of references to “nation” and “nationality” in the Three Districts’ texts suggests that, in view of government ideologues, the degree of effort put toward solving the national question was now much higher when compared to Sheng Shicai’s era, that is, the administration of Three Districts furthered the interests not of “fourteen nationalities of Xinjiang,” but of a single “people of Three Districts.” Similar to the Soviet context (Martin 2001, 5, 73, 182), the rise of a kind of supranational identity in East Turkestan might have been expected by its policy makers after a period of affirmative action and indigenization, when the respective national cultures had exhausted themselves, the nationalities had naturally amalgamated into a unified people, and national territorial forms grew devoid of significant national content. To borrow the expression of one expert on communist propaganda, who argues that the word “people” opens the gate to the “world of socialism” (Fidelius 2002, 18), it can be said that the propagandists of the Three Districts have not yet walked through the gate, but have opened it more than enough for future events to come.

Resemblance of the Three Districts’ discourse of nation and nationalism to the Soviet policy of nationality coincides with the thesis explored above that the Soviet Union had a considerable impact on institutions and the ideology of the insurgency. Unfortunately, we can only speculate on the future course of the Three Districts’ national policy; neither can the degree of social penetration of the Three Districts’ official ideology be reliably assessed. What is beyond doubt, though, is that the Three Districts’ Revolution effectively ended in August and September 1949, after Ekhmetjan Qasimi, Abdukerim Abbasov, Ishaq Beg, and other highly esteemed leaders perished in a suspicious plane crash that occurred when they were en route from Almaty to Beijing to negotiate with the victorious CPC about the future of the Three Districts. When the crash was announced by the Soviets—only after a substantial delay—Seypidin Ezizi, the Three Districts’ minister of education, became the head of a new group of representatives in Beijing that consented to abandon calls for the autonomy of East Turkestan. Simultaneously, the provincial troops surrendered in the KMT-administered districts of Xinjiang, and the People’s Liberation Army more or less peacefully took over the province by the end of 1949. Muhemmed Imin Bughra, Eysa Yusuf, Polat Qadiri, and other KMT-affiliated nationalist activists fled via southern Xinjiang and India to Turkey, while Mes’ud Sabiri, refusing to leave, was arrested and executed in the early 1950s, along with many other senior Turkic officials and activists associated with both the KMT and the Three Districts, as well as captured guerilla fighters

like Osman Batur. Eventually, the CPC instituted a minority policy which contained many principles that had appeared during Sheng Shicai's administration and in the Three Districts' discourse on nation and nationalism. It can be said, therefore, that Sheng's and the Three Districts' approach to community and communal interest precluded the stance that was to be later taken by the PRC's administration toward the national question.

4.3 Chapter Summary

The texts examined in the final chapter revealed that the East Turkestani/Uyghur nation workers and ideologists of the 1940s built on the ideas of nation and nationalism expressed by their predecessors in 1930s. Turkic national activists associated with the KMT and the central government of the ROC appropriated the discourse of the East Turkestani nation developed by the Turkic nationalists during the Xinjiang insurgent movement of the 1930s in a largely unchanged manner. For them, the East Turkestani *nation*, comprising all the Turkic groups of Xinjiang, was defined by identity markers such as ethnicity, religion, homeland, culture, tradition of past statehood, language, or vernacularized script. In their perception, East Turkestanis were an integral part of the larger Turkic nation residing in other countries, mainly the USSR and Turkey. Similarly, national theorists of the Three Districts' Revolution between 1944 and 1949 were able to draw upon the national delimitation process that took place in Xinjiang in the 1930s during the Sheng Shicai administration. They argued that East Turkestan was inhabited by Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Tatars, and Uzbeks, who, despite sharing Turkic descent and identity, constituted separate and equal *nationalities*. These Turkic and Islamic nationalities, along with other non-Turkic and non-Islamic groups, formed the multiethnic and multiconfessional population of East Turkestan.

Both the KMT-affiliated Turkic and the Three Districts' insurgent propagandists also formulated a discourse of national interest that was a continuation of the 1930s Turkic nationalism and Sheng's affirmative action. Similar to those found in writings of the 1930s, prominent values in their chart of national interest were of a political nature, namely representative government and equal rights for all national groups inhabiting Xinjiang. They also featured the rhetoric of the modernization imperative that was to be put into effect by the state. Similarities in the perceptions of nation and nationalism between the discourse of the KMT and that of the northern Xinjiang insurgent propagandists again point to the phenomenon of *fragmented nationalism*. Despite the differences in terminology and the political objectives of the two movements,

as well as their factual siding with directly conflicting political movements and powers, the two groups of protagonists covertly agreed on the definition and interest of the East Turkestani/Uyghur nation in East Turkestan Xinjiang.

However, the discourse of the KMT Turkic nation workers and northern Xinjiang insurgent propagandists investigated in this chapter also revealed the fundamentally changed geopolitical situation in the region. After Xinjiang came under the control of the central government with the arrival of the KMT in 1940s—the first time since the founding of the ROC—the standing of the East Turkestanis suddenly changed from the most sizeable ethnic group of Xinjiang into a small *minority nationality* of China. For the Turkic nationalists, campaigning for the central government's recognition of the East Turkestanis' status as that of a constituent ethnic group that was politically and socially equal to the Hans, Mongols, and Tibetans became one of the top items in their agenda. The prominence of this goal in the discourse of national interest implies that immediately upon their inclusion into the modern Chinese state, East Turkestanis started to fear assimilation by the overwhelmingly Han “Chinese nation” (中華民族 *Zhōnghuá mínzú*).

Similarly, regardless of the extent to which the Soviet Union inspired, tolerated, supported, influenced, determined, or orchestrated the events, the tone, and the direction of the Three Districts' Revolution between 1944 and 1949, the insurgent discourse of the Uyghur communal identity and interest featured common traits with Sheng Shicai's Soviet-inspired ethnic propaganda, as well as with the ethnic rhetoric introduced in the Soviet Union. Resolute anti-KMT and antinationalist statements and rhetorical recasting of Uyghur, Kazak, Kyrgyz, Tatar, and Uzbek Turkic nationalities into *Xinjiang people* implies the propagandists' intention to create an image of an ethnically unspecified population, divided internally into horizontal layers defined by social status rather than vertically by national identity. In retrospect, the KMT-affiliated Turkic nationalists' concern with assimilation into the Chinese nation foreshadowed the post-1949 ideology of East Turkestani and Uyghur nationalism, while the Three Districts' Soviet-influenced insurgent ideologists' project of deethnicizing the Xinjiang people prefigured the post-1949 ethnic policy of the CPC.

Conclusion

This book attempts to outline the emergence and evolution of the Uyghur intelligentsia's discourse of nation and national interest from the late Qing period (c. 1900) until the end of the Republican era (1949). The inquiry drew on discussions of these phenomena presented in historiographical works, poems, newspaper articles, propaganda pamphlets, speeches, memoirs, and other texts authored by Uyghur intelligentsia and political activists. It did not strive to assess how deeply and widely the ideas penetrated the late Qing and Republican Xinjiang settled Turkic Muslim society, preferring to limit itself to the sphere of early modern intellectual history. It also did not aspire to capture the process of Uyghur national consciousness and movement in its complexity and entirety, preferring to look for answers to two questions: By what criteria did Uyghur intellectuals define their nation? What did Uyghur intellectuals regard as a national interest? Respective chapters of this book identified four types of intellectual discourse of nation and national interest within the examined sources.

The writings of Molla Musa Sayrami analyzed in Chapter 1 exposed the author's discourse of community and communal interest at the demise of the premodern worldview in late Qing Xinjiang at the turn of the twentieth century. It was illustrated that besides the strictly religious meaning, Sayrami's term "Musulman" (i.e., Muslim) also conveyed a consciousness of common identity defined by a shared ancestry, place of residence, mode of life, language, culture, history, mythology, political tradition, relics, memory of the past, sense of solidarity, and a number of other traits common to the indigenous settled Turkic Muslims of Yettishahr (southern and eastern Xinjiang), which also extended to the Taranchi of northern Xinjiang. In other words, the premodern category of "Musulman" formed a protonational fundament for a future national lens of communal identity and interest expressed by later modern intelligentsia of the Xinjiang settled Turkic Muslims. Sayrami's writings also displayed his perceptions of communal Musulman interest. In the initial stage of anti-Qing uprisings as described by Sayrami, the Musulman of Xinjiang also managed to act as a protonational community seeking to defend their common interest by overthrowing a religiously and ethnically heterogeneous administration and establishing a sovereign jurisdiction in respective localities throughout Xinjiang. Nevertheless, in the subsequent stages of the insurgency, the Musulmans' protonational identity and solidarity dissipated,

and their movement fractured along the lines of local and social factionalism. Therefore, although the Musulman elite strata in Xinjiang did have a clear sense of protonational communal identity and interest at the close of the pre-modern period, this sense was ultimately of secondary importance to local and social interests and so failed to materialize into communal action. Thus, the Muslims' shared protonational identity, displayed by Musulman intellectual elites such as Sayrami, did not generate a supralocal or suprasocial sense of communal equality and homegeneity, whereas local and social divisions remained prominent stimuli for communal action within the broader scope of the premodern religious realm. This chapter argued that, despite all of this, the community that in following decades became called Uyghurs possessed a distinct protonational sense of communal identity and interest already prior to the transfer of the Uyghur national idea to Xinjiang.

Chapter 2 dealt with indigenous settled Turkic Muslims' intellectual views of communal identity and interest at the dawn of modernity in Xinjiang in the 1910s and 1920s. It explained how during this period some Xinjiang Turkic intellectuals and progressives venturing to Russia/Soviet Union, the Ottoman Empire/Turkey, and China proper grew familiar with local principles of modernism and the formation of national consciousness (exemplified in writings of a Russian Taranchi Jadidist, Nezerghoja Abdusémetov) and introduced them into the Xinjiang Turkic context. As a result, modernist activities in education and publishing, as well as new social organizations, were brought to Xinjiang mostly from the Russian Turkic milieu and triggered a wave of Xinjiang Turkic national awakening. Writings of enlighteners like Abdukhaliq Uyghur and Memtili Tewpiq reveal that during this period Xinjiang Turkic elites formulated the idea of community as a modern nation, descended from famed ancient Uyghurs and defined by a shared ancestry and homeland. Similar to patterns ascertained elsewhere in the world, the writings and actions of this new class of nationally conscious intelligentsia, financially supported by affluent progressive philanthropists, stimulated the emergence of a national identity for Xinjiang Turkic Muslims. Their writings also defined and motivated action toward attaining communal interests, such as modern education and culture, enabling improvement in the social and economic status of their nation. Turkic intellectuals also personally acted in the national movement toward achieving these objectives by opening modern schools and running other progressive projects. Their discourse of nation and national interest thus functioned as a national protest, calling their community to awaken into national consciousness and to engage in national movement—to start defending their national interest, envisioned at the time in cultural and economic contours.

Chapter 3 explored the politicization of cultural agitation and national movement into the nationalist discourse and nationalist movement. It showed the perfection of the previous discourse of national characteristics and the expansion of the discourse of national interest from realms of culture and economy into the sphere of politics and statecraft. A decisive stimulus was provided by the Turkic insurgency in 1930–34, which caused the provincial government to lose control of eastern and southern Xinjiang and resulted in the proclamation of the first East Turkestan Republic (ETIR) in Kashgar in November 1933. During this movement, Qutluq Haji Shewqi, Muhemmed Imin Bughra, Emin Wahidi, and other Turkic intellectuals and politicians viewed their community as an East Turkestanian nation, inhabiting their East Turkestanian homeland since time immemorial. They also devised a rich symbology of the newly awakened, yet primordial nation, including a national history, the experience of misgovernance and oppression by previous administrations, a tradition of national resistance, a national flag, a national language, and other national attributes. They posited that the past exploitation by China justified the insurgency as a revolutionary national movement bent on the restoration of their national territory and prestige. For these theoreticians, the chief interest of the East Turkestanian nation was an independent nation-state based on the principles of representative government, republicanism, and modernity. The chief means to meeting these ends were national education, press, technology, progress, and development. The nation-state was to be further characterized by its obligation to conduct modern national practice in the vernacular language and script. The shift of the discourse of national interest from the cultural and economic sphere into political terminology allows for this rhetoric to be called nationalist. This nationalist discourse argued, moreover, that the East Turkestanis' national interest should be defended by the nation-state. By securing the population's national interest and fulfilling the modernization imperative, the nation-state was, in turn, to retain its legitimacy and fortify its citizens' national consciousness, which then was to lead to further national demands. And although the extent of the ETIR's actual implementation of the representative government and modernization imperative was merely symbolical, its policy statements were one of the most crucial stimuli in modern Uyghur history, for they were the first to establish the state as the primary agent of social organization and control in Xinjiang.

After the Turkic insurgency was quelled in 1934, Sheng Shicai's administration adopted the insurgent nationalist rhetoric of nation and national interest, while simultaneously making several subtle, yet very important changes to it. First of all, Sheng's rhetoric reflected the official division of Xinjiang's

population into fourteen constituent nationalities. In the researched texts, the concept of the East Turkestani nation was replaced by the discourse on Uyghur, Kazak, Kyrgyz, Tatar, Uzbek, and Tajik nationality. The rhetoric also gradually introduced the concept of an efficient provincial government and unity among Xinjiang nationalities and with the motherland as the most important communal interest. The discourse of Sheng's administration thus abandoned the idea of an East Turkestani nation and independent nation-state. The sources also revealed Sheng's gradual embrace of Soviet ethnic policy tenets in the form of affirmative action towards Xinjiang nationalities and the indigenization of their identities. But in other aspects, Sheng's discourse of Uyghur nationality and its interest featured many ideas identical to those of the previous Turkic insurgency. The Uyghur nationality was again defined as a modern nation bound by "primordial" national traits and symbols. Sheng's discourse also endorsed the fact that Uyghurs were the dominant nationality in Xinjiang/East Turkestan and that they had been mobilized by previous administrators' oppression to stage legitimate mass movements toward attaining political sovereignty, modernity, and economic prosperity. Similar to the Turkic nationalist insurgency, Sheng's discourse agreed that it was the duty of the provincial administration to secure the Uyghurs' national interest, which in turn enabled the government to retain its legitimacy. Thus, although Sheng Shicai arguably aimed at the eventual obliteration of national boundaries between nationalities in Xinjiang, the temporary discourse of Uyghur nation and nationalism embraced during the early years of his rule featured a degree of politicization of national identity and national interests that was similar to the preceding discourse of the East Turkestani insurgent intelligentsia. In a seemingly paradoxical way, some of the earlier East Turkestani nationalists' ideas of a representative national government, tasked with providing for Turkic political interests and implementing the modernization imperative, were put into practice by Sheng Shicai.

Chapter 4 illustrated that a shift in the East Turkestani/Uyghur intellectual discourse of nation and its interest occurred as a result of the altered geopolitical situation in Xinjiang during the 1940s. After the assertion of the KMT's authority in Xinjiang, local Turkic Muslims suddenly became an insignificant percentage of the sizeable population of the ROC, which was moreover defined by the contemporary official state ethnic theory as a single "Chinese nation." Texts by KMT-affiliated Turkic nationalists like Eysa Yusuf, Mes'ud Sabiri, Muhemmed Imin Bughra, and Polat Qadiri showed that their authors had to fiercely negotiate the status of their nation within the Chinese state with Han KMT policy makers. They refused to be considered a part of the "Chinese nation" and instead argued that the Turkic groups of East Turkestan were

inalienable components of a single Turkic nation comprising all Turkic nationalities of the world. Referring to the Three Peoples' Principles and other ROC legislature that stipulated the right to self-determination for all nationalities of China, the KMT Turkic nationalists held that only if the central government acknowledged East Turkestanis as a separate and autonomous nationality could East Turkestan be sustainably administered as a part of China and contribute to the well-being of all citizens of the ROC. In other words, at the moment when Xinjiang was incorporated into the ROC administration and the East Turkestanis became a minority nationality of China, their intellectuals were pressed to articulate a complex discourse of demands for the state's recognition of the East Turkestanian nation's existence as the primary national interest. The Turkic politicians also inserted into their discourse a number of national interests articulated by the 1930s insurgent nationalists, such as political autonomy, representative government, economic well-being, modernity, and a national education and press, which were again to be achieved by the state that was to recognize therewith East Turkestanis' distinct national identity and ethno-political status within the Chinese state.

In contrast, the insurgency that broke out in three northern Xinjiang districts in the fall of 1944 and led to the provincial government's loss of the Three Districts until 1949 gave rise to an entirely different discourse on the Xinjiang Turkic Muslim community and its interests. Arguably due to the ardently anti-KMT and antinationalist motivation of the movement, as well as to the Soviet involvement in the 1940s' events in northern Xinjiang, the Three Districts' discourse on communal identity and interests, which also emulated strategies that had been employed by the Soviet-influenced Sheng Shicai in the 1930s, experienced almost a complete disappearance of "national" terminology. Instead, the ideologists of the Three Districts' Revolution perceived their community as a single people formed not only of Turkic and Muslim peoples residing in the geographical entity of East Turkestan. In other words, although the notion of ethnicity and national identity did appear in the texts examined herein, it was not nations or nationalities but people who were in strife for their communal interests of liberation, equality, and democracy. Nationalism was occasionally even declared a reactionary and detrimental ideology. Similar to Sheng Shicai, the Three Districts' propagandists strived to downplay or ignore the existence of boundaries between Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Taranchis, Uzbeks, Tatars, and other nationalities of Xinjiang in their texts and to engender a cross-national category of communal identity—people.

This book strived to refrain from exclusively adopting the primordialist, the ethnosymbolist, or the modernist approach to the emergence of a modern Uyghur national consciousness. Instead, the chapters treated nation as

an intellectual construct, a mode of perception, and a type of discourse disseminated by settled Xinjiang Turkic Muslim intelligentsia among their fellow compatriots. On the one hand, the defining traits of the Musulman protonational community relevant for Xinjiang Turkic scholars at the close of Qing rule shaped future perceptions of communal identity throughout the whole Republican era. At the same time, Xinjiang Turkic intelligentsia's notions of communal identity evolved into national and nationalist discourse as a result of stimuli generated by modernization trends beyond Xinjiang borders. Additionally, the discourse of national interest and nationalism was not treated here as a clearly defined ideology that had a particular beginning and end, held a particular degree of social validity, and materialized in a particular degree. Instead, the contents and particulars of its emergence were observed. More precisely, this book showed that the sources featured a discourse of varied communal interest, namely of ethnically and religiously unspecified (yet effective) government, of communal self-improvement in cultural and economic status, of nation-state (or alternately of political autonomy), and of preservation (or alternately of obliteration) of national boundaries in a changing geopolitical setting. The findings also show that there was no direct linear evolutionary process between the respective concepts of communal identity and interest—many of them existed in a parallel manner, in different geographical locations, and within different intellectual factions. It is nevertheless possible to establish a tentative typology of the discourse of nation and national interest appearing in the inspected writings. Chronologically aligned and roughly positioned within the time span between 1900 and 1949, the typology traces the emergence of national consciousness and nationalist ideology among East Turkestani/Uyghur intelligentsia, or in other words, captures the evolution of the premodern community's intellectual representation of Xinjiang's indigenous settled Turkic Muslims into that of the modern East Turkestani/Uyghur nation with a clearly defined national interest:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Type A | Protonational identity and interest (1900s) |
| Type B | Emergence of national idea and national agitation (1910s–1920s) |
| Type C | Politicization of national interest (1930s) |
| | C.1 East Turkestani nation |
| | C.2 Uyghur nationality |
| Type D | Significance of national boundary in flux (1930s and 1940s) |
| | D.1 East Turkestani nationality |
| | D.2 People of Uyghur nationality ¹ |

1 See also Table 5.

This research also revealed other themes resonating in an early modern Uyghur discourse of nation and nationalism. The formation and contents of the discourse corroborate the perennial role of Xinjiang as a pivotal conduit of ideas and ideologies among cultures and empires. Chapter 1 described the interrelation of an indigenous uprising with Khoqandi adventurism, Qing empire-building strategies, and British diplomacy. Chapter 2 portrayed the journey of the national idea and progressive modernism from Europe-inspired Turkic communities of Russia/USSR and the Ottoman Empire/Turkey to Chinese Turkestan, where it interacted with ideas of modern Chinese revolutionary republicanism stemming from China proper. Chapter 3 depicted the inclusion of theretofore largely isolated postimperial satrapy of Xinjiang in the heat of the Sino-Japanese War and the subsequent growth of Soviet influence in the province, which led to a captivating amalgamation of Soviet-inspired policies with Republican Chinese state ideology and practice. Chapter 4 covered the catapultation of Xinjiang into the events of European World War II, into the plethora of Sino-Soviet ties, and into the global Cold War, which generated a curious mix of East Turkestani nationalism and cultural pan-Turkism with KMT state ideology in areas under provincial control, as well as the influence of Soviet ideology and nationality policy into the insurgent Three Districts. The ancient geopolitical significance of the Western Regions as a vital hub of political interests and ideological currents reemerged to an unabated degree precisely in the period under research in this volume. Xinjiang's post-1949 position as a hub of world geopolitics and a potential hotbed of a major clash of world power interests and antagonistic ideologies, which is directly consequential to events described in the chapters above, has been already explained in the Introduction.

The research also showed that the antagonistic *dynamics of accord* and the *dynamics of discord* outlined in Chapter 1, which influenced the cohesiveness of communal identity and the actions of Xinjiang indigenous settled Turkic Muslims, remained active throughout the whole early modern period until 1949. The centripetal *dynamics of accord* in the form of a common ethnic origin, religion, language, mode of life, culture, mythology, political heritage, and other traits articulated by Molla Musa Sayrami in his perception of Musulman identity at the demise of the premodern era were in the following decades elaborated on by the invention of "primordial" concepts, such as a common ethnonym, homeland, history, plight, liberation movement, and other ideas featured in the later intellectual discourse on the East Turkestani/Uyghur national identity. In regard to the perception of communal interest, Sayrami's portrayals of the premodern Musulmans' urge to overthrow an ethnically and religiously heterogeneous administration evolved during the following period

into cultural agitation and the nationalist rhetoric of the East Turkestani/Uyghur national movement, which was intent on improving their cultural status, attaining political sovereignty, and preserving a distinct identity in the immense Chinese realm.

Both on the discursive and on the communal movement level, the dynamics of accord were often countered by the antagonistic *dynamics of discord*. Sayrami noted the disintegration of the common Musulman uprising along social and local fault lines and even articulated his preference for reinstallation of the Qing administration over the misrule of the Musulman religious aristocracy or Khoqandi strongmen. In the 1910s and 1920s, when Abdukhalik Uyghur, Memtili Tewpiq, and other enlightened philanthropists promoted secular education and the idea of a Uyghur nation, significant portions of the religious establishment belonging to that very same Uyghur nation verbally and factually sabotaged the modernist initiative because they feared the erosion of traditional values and principles of the traditional religious realm and imperial world order. At the time when Qutluq Haji Shewqi and other nationalist intellectuals propagandized the concept of the East Turkestani nation during the nationalist insurgency in Kashgar in the 1930s, Khoja Niyaz Haji and other fellow East Turkestani figures allied with Sheng Shicai, who was at the very same moment in Urumchi dismembering the East Turkestani nation into several Turkic nationalities. At the time when the Three Gentlemen fought for recognition of the East Turkestani nation as a constituent nationality of China and spread ideals of cultural pan-Turkism within the KMT-controlled eastern and southern Xinjiang in the 1940s, their compatriots in the Three Districts were arguing that ethnic distinctions among Xinjiang nationalities did not matter and all the exploited people of the province, regardless of their ethnicity and religious creed, should unite in revolution against reactionary government, whose ethnicity was, in fact, also insignificant. The intensity of the dynamics of discord within East Turkestani/Uyghur communal action patterns is one of the most significant reasons why this book tells a story of a failed nationalist movement.

But more importantly, this research demonstrated that although the dynamics of discord were potently influencing the actions of indigenous Xinjiang settled Turkic Muslims throughout the entire Republican era, they did not necessarily inhibit the materialization of the dynamics of mental accord into an intellectual discourse of national identity and interest. Sayrami's writings exhibited his perceptions of Musulman as a single protonational community despite the failure of the anti-Qing uprising. Enlightened cultural agitators of the late Qing and early Republican era considered their conservative and nationally unaware fellow compatriots to be asleep but still a part of their nation. Although a large part of the political objectives of the Kashgar-centered East Turkestani insurgency and the Sheng Shicai administration in the 1930s

diverged, intellectuals and political figures allied with the two powers articulated a discourse of national identity and interest that implies that they perceived both camps as components of the same nation. And even though in the 1940s the KMT Turkic associates and the Turkic leaders of the Three Districts allied with two directly antagonistic political agencies, both groups of intellectuals wrote texts that show that their authors were aware that they belonged to the same national community and even drafted largely similar sets of national interest. The situation when East Turkestani/Uyghur intellectuals formulated a complex discourse of a shared national identity and interest of indigenous Xinjiang settled Turkic Muslims, while significant segments of the nation allied with antagonistic political agencies, or even used a different national name, was tentatively termed *fragmented nationalism*. The above study showed that in the Uyghur case, the absence of a concerted mass movement of all members of the nation toward a single goal does not imply the absence of a shared national identity and interest. To paraphrase one famous definition, authors of the above texts imagined a nation, the actions of which were fragmented, which was by no means politically sovereign, and which could even be called by a variety of names, yet which still stood as a single nation in their authors' vision. This research indicates that a group of people can still feel as a nation even when its subgroups do not act like one, when the nationalist figment of national unity in thought and action does not materialize, or when the nation loses its struggle for political sovereignty.

It is also useful here to relate this assertion to the two major studies of early modern Uyghur and East Turkestani nationalism mentioned in the Introduction and referred to throughout this volume—the works of Andrew Forbes and Laura Newby. In concluding his book, Forbes disputed the idea that the various Xinjiang Muslim rebellions of the 1930s shared a common aim of founding an independent state. Instead, he posited that Xinjiang should be viewed as three separate areas, each of which with Turkic and other Muslim peoples who possessed a different degree of loyalty to China. In particular, eastern Xinjiang Turks, who had a long history of close relations to China and northern Xinjiang Taranchis, Kazaks, Huis, and other agriculturalists, were much less prone to secession than the Tarim Basin Turks. Given these differing patterns of loyalties to China, the respective insurgent factions could hardly pursue the same political objectives or form a unified nationalist movement. In the following decade, Turkic nationalism was further manipulated and compromised by a clash of interests between the USSR and the KMT, which were finally quenched by the CPC's takeover (Forbes 1986, 229–33). In contrast, Laura Newby claims that despite the obvious fact that Xinjiang Turkic Muslim factions did not share a common objective of founding an independent state, “what they did share and what Forbes has perhaps failed to stress sufficiently,

was a national consciousness" (Newby 1986, 238). As stated in this research, although the dynamics of discord resulted in the failure of the East Turkestani/Uyghur mass nationalist movement before 1949, the dynamics of accord nevertheless led to the emergence of a complex intellectual discourse of a fragmented nation and national interest that reflected the existence of the East Turkestani/Uyghur national consciousness.

This book also elaborates on John Breuilly's intellectual interpretation of nationalism (Breuilly 1993, 149–50) and on the role of academic personages, enlightened intellectuals, and modernist activists in Miroslav Hroch's famous A-B-C chronology of nation-formation movements (Hroch 1996, 81; Hroch 2000, 23). Similar to phases A and B of a national movement, as outlined by Hroch, it was first the travelled and cultured Turkic entrepreneurs and educators who in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century transferred the national idea to Xinjiang and disseminated it within their community. They were also able to articulate various cultural interests and educated the first generation of the progressive social stratum. The first generation of educators later took part in the initial wave of the nationalist movement in the 1930s, while their students played a major role in defending national interests in the 1940s. In other words, the new intelligentsia was able to use knowledge and skills acquired in the early modern schools to stage a complex political movement aiming to further national values and seriously challenge their alien government. It was this generation of East Turkestani/Uyghur intelligentsia who propelled the largely cultural, national movement in the direction of heated political nationalism and who accomplished the intertwining of the national idea with politics and statecraft. It has been pointed out numerous times throughout the above text that it is difficult to assess the degree to which the above examined early modern intellectual perceptions of communal identity and interest penetrated society. Regardless of this difficulty, the proclamation of the modernist ETR, the affirmative action towards Uyghur identity during Sheng Shicai's era, the propelling of East Turkestani national interests by the KMT Turkic figures at the central and provincial government level, and the 1940s' East Turkestan Republic/Three Districts' Revolution suggest that early modern Xinjiang Turkic intellectuals did, at least partially, succeed in their mission to inculcate national values into the minds of their fellow compatriots.

Another mention deserves to be made about the position of religion in the emergence of the modern Uyghur, or East Turkestani, national identity. Several studies pointed out that the formation of modern nations is closely related to, if not directly caused by or dependent on, the demise of the religious old world order (Gellner 1983; Anderson 1991). This research has elaborated on this assertion by showing that even after the Xinjiang Turkic Muslims' premodern imperial-religious worldview vacated the historical stage to make room for the East

Turkestan/Uyghur national idea, religious identity retained its significance for Xinjiang indigenous settled Turks. Despite the fact that in the early modern era between 1884 and 1949 religion ceased to be the fundamental prism through which indigenous settled Xinjiang Turkic Muslim elites saw the world, for them becoming an East Turkestan and Uyghur simultaneously meant remaining Muslim. As the examined texts showed, all early modern theoreticians of East Turkestan/Uyghur communal identity believed that their nation was defined by equally important ethnic and religious characteristics, or more precisely, that they are as much East Turkestan/Uyghur as Muslim. Analogously to the new Muslim intelligentsia in Czarist and Soviet Russia, the Xinjiang Jadids initially sought to modernize Islam, but eventually invented the East Turkestan/Uyghur nation and its attributes. By striving to relocate the communal center of Xinjiang Turkic society from the mosque to the school, these prophets of modernity formulated a modernized version of Xinjiang Turkic Muslimhood. Their efforts should therefore be viewed as yet another one of “many Jadidisms,” “each with its own concerns rooted in local social struggles” (Khalid 1998, 93).

The sources under research finally showed a clear continuity among the national interests expressed by indigenous Xinjiang Turkic intelligentsia in all respective types of discourse from circa 1900 until 1949. From Nezerghoja Abdusémetov through Abdukhalik Uyghur, Memtili Tewpiq, and Qutluq Haji Shewqi through Muhemmed Imin Bughra, Eysa Yusuf Alptekin, Mes'ud Sabiri, and Polat Qadiri to the Three Districts' ideologists, these and other activists explicitly argued that the East Turkestan/Uyghur national interest was primarily to follow the *modernization imperative*, that is, to strive for modern education, publishing, social organizations, healthcare, hygiene, and similar attributes of modernity, which ultimately led to improvement in the cultural, social, and material status of their nation. Islam was in all of the above types of discourse seen as a creed that was not contradictory but fully compatible with values of secular national awakening, modernity, progress, and material wealth. Secondly, early modern Xinjiang Turkic elites also argued that in modern times, their nation had the right to see its national interests provided for by a modern state founded on principles of representative government, equality of all citizens, rule of law, and righteous administration, either in the form of an independent nation-state or an autonomous province. It has been remarked elsewhere that nationalism is able to function as a sustainable ideology not needing to be enforced by other doctrines only when it propels oppressed nations. Indeed, this book shows the prominence of the political agenda in East Turkestan/Uyghur national interests throughout the early modern era: from the moment the very first rays of modernity gleamed over Xinjiang, the ultimate *raison d'être* for Uyghur intelligentsia has been the quest for the *political emancipation* of their nation.

TABLE 5.1 *Typology of discourse of nation and national interest in the researched sources*

Type	Administration (period)	Sources	Communal Name	Communal Interest	Secession?
A	Late Qing (1880–1912)	<i>Tarikhi Eminiyе</i> , <i>Tarikhi Hemidi</i>	Musulman	– efficient administration, well-being of common people	Not primarily important
B	Early Republic of China (1912–33)	Poems of Abdukhaliq Uyghur, Memtili Tewpiq, articles by Nezerghoja Abdusémetov	nation of Uyghurs’ descendants	– cultural and social status, modernization imperative fulfilled by the nation itself	Not primarily important
C.1	East Turkestan Republic (1933–34)	<i>Independence, Free Turkestan, Life of East Turkestan, Memoir of the Revolution, History of East Turkestan</i>	East Turkestani nation	– efficient administration, enforce- ment of the legislature of the ROC – nation state, political sovereignty, representative government, pro-Western diplomatic orientation – modernization imperative fulfilled by the state	Necessary
C.2	Xinjiang under early Sheng Shicai’s rule (1933–37)	<i>New Life</i>	Uyghur nationality	– effectively administered Xinjiang province, representative govern- ment, autonomy, unity, equality of nationalities – modernization imperative fulfilled by the state	Out of the question

Type	Administration (period)	Sources	Communal Name	Communal Interest	Secession?
D.1	Xinjiang within Republic of China (1934–49)	<i>Voice of Chinese Turkestan, Freedom</i> , writings of Muhemmed Imin Bughra, Mes'ud Sabiri, Polat Qadiri	East Turkestani nationality	– preservation of national boundary within the “Chinese nation,” recognition as minority nationality equal to the Han, autonomy within China, democracy – modernization imperative fulfilled by the state	Out of the question
D.2	East Turkestan Republic/ Three Districts (1944–49)	<i>Revolutionary East Turkestan</i> , pamphlets of the revolutionary administration, poems of a Soviet Uyghur writer	people of Uyghur nationality	– representative government, democracy, unity, equality of people of all nationalities – well-being of people of all nationalities, modernization imperative fulfilled by the state	Necessary/ Not primarily important

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